DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 479 665 CE 085 341

AUTHOR	Falk, Ian; Smith, Tony
TITLE	Leadership in Vocational Education and Training: Leadership By Design, Not By Default.
INSTITUTION	National Centre for Vocational Education Research, Leabrook (Australia).
ISBN	ISBN-1-74096-133-1
PUB DATE	2003-06-00
NOTE	62p.
AVAILABLE FROM	National Centre for Vocational Education Research, 252 Kensington Road, Leabrook, South Australia 5068, Australia (Cat. no. 985; $25.30 Australian). Tel: 08 8333 8400; Fax: 08 8331 9211; e-mail: vet_req@ncver.edu.au; Web site: http://www.ncver.edu.au. For full text: http://www.ncver.edu.au/research/proj/nr0018.pdf.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research (143)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS
DESCRIPTORS	*Adult Vocational Education; Educational Administration; Educational Cooperation; Foreign Countries; Instructional Leadership; Intervention; *Leadership Effectiveness; *Leadership Qualities; Leadership Responsibility; *Leadership Styles; Postsecondary Education; Role Theory; Tables (Data); *Vocational Directors; Vocational Schools; Vocational Training Centers
IDENTIFIERS	Australia; *Educational Leadership; Facilitative Leadership; Generic Skills; Microanalysis; *Role Evaluation; Role Shift; Situational Analysis

ABSTRACT

A study looked at knowledge and theory on vocational education and training (VET) leadership in a range of diverse sites in Australia. Twelve chosen sites fell into these three broad groups: technical and further education, other public providers, and private providers. Researchers gathered documents, survey responses, and individual and group interview responses. The data were analyzed by thematic, tabulation, situational analysis and detailed micro-analysis methods. These five research questions were addressed: what changes have occurred in the roles and responsibilities of VET managers over the last 10 years; what factors have brought about these changes; what are the current VET leadership roles and responsibilities; what are the drivers on VET managers; and how might VET leadership roles and responsibilities change in the next five years. The study found the following: (1) VET leadership depends on how leaders process ongoing change; (2) VET leadership is the process of enabling interaction between internal, external, and individual domains of activity; (3) characteristics of leadership were different at the four stages of solving a problem (trigger stage, initiating leadership stage, developmental leadership stage, and sustainability stage); (4) effective leadership is not accidental or by default; and (5) generic skills such as interpersonal skills, risk-taking, team-building, analytical, and decision-making skills apply to all stages. (Contains the results of detailed analyses, an extensive bibliography, and methodology description.) (SLR)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 479 665

NCVER

Leadership in vocational education and training

Leadership by design, not by default

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE, AND IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA FOR ERIC COLLECTION SUBSCRIBERS ONLY, HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

S. Hayman

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

2A

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Ian Falk

Tony Smith

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

CE 085 341

Leadership in vocational education and training

Leadership by design, not by default

Ian Falk

Tony Smith

NCVER

Acknowledgements

The project was assisted by the advice and editorial comment of a management team consisting of:

- Josephine Balatti (Centre for Research and Learning in Regional Australia, Queensland)
- Kevin Vallence (Centre for Research and Learning in Regional Australia, Victoria)
- Trevor Cairney (Centre for Research and Learning in Regional Australia, NSW)
- Marc Bowles (Research associate, Centre for Research and Learning in Regional Australia)

The project team acknowledges the input to the development of the questionnaires and other research-related issues of the management team and these research assistants:

- Stephanie Mitchell (Western Australia)
- JulieAnn MacDonald and Luaine Hawkins (Queensland)

© **Australian National Training Authority, 2003**

This work has been produced by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) with the assistance of funding provided by the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA). It is published by NCVER under licence from ANTA. Apart from any use permitted under the Copyright Act 1968, no part of this publication may be reported by any process without the written permission of NCVER Ltd. Requests should be made in writing to NCVER Ltd.

The views and opinions expressed in this document are those of the author/project team and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Australian National Training Authority.

ISBN 1 74096 133 1 print edition
1 74096 134 X web edition
TD/TNC 73.15

Published by NCVER
ABN 87 007 967 311
252 Kensington Road, Leabrook SA 5068
PO Box 115, Kensington Park SA 5068, Australia
www.ncver.edu.au

Contents

Tables and figures 4

Executive summary 5

PART 1: DESIGNING EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP INTERVENTIONS IN VET

1 Introduction 10
- Context 10
- Methodology 10
- Definitions 11
- Research questions 12
- Limitations of the study 13

2 Literature review 14
- Change and leadership 14
- Four kinds of leadership theories 15
- Other strands of leadership research and theory 16

3 Findings and conclusions 19
- Introduction 19
- Summary of findings 20
- Details of findings 20
- Synthesised answers to the research questions 22
- Implications 24
- Conclusion 25

PART 2: RESULTS OF DETAILED ANALYSES

4 Leadership and context analyses 28
- Leadership constructs 28
- How does 'leadership' interact with 'context'? 30

5 Leadership roles and responsibilities 39
- Research questions 1 and 3 39
- Research questions 2 and 4 42
- Research question 5 47

References 51

Appendix: Methodology 53

Tables and figures

Tables

1 Categories of leadership constructs 28
2 Factors influencing change and impacting on VET managers 42
3 Four key groups of leadership attributes for future VET 47
4 Summary of sites and participants 54
5 Study sites by provider type and organisation 55
6 Gender of one-on-one interviewees by provider 55
7 Job/position description of respondents by provider 56
8 Mission of provider organisations 57

Figures

1 The design of effective leadership interventions 22
2 VET-in-schools leadership intervention life span and leadership implications 37

Executive summary

Corporatisation of the vocational education and training (VET) sector has led to a broadening of the VET client focus and increased accountability. These changes have contributed to the need for new leadership styles, attributes and processes.

This report describes a research study into leadership in vocational education and training organisations. It seeks to generate new information, theory and knowledge in an area of VET leadership. The purpose of the study is to gain insight into the conditions for and characteristics of effective leadership in vocational education and training now and in coming years.

The study focusses on the processes of leadership, as well as the characteristics of individual leaders, and draws on literature from a wide range of leadership studies. The theory of 'enabling leadership' is used as a framework for the study. This theory suggests that the effectiveness of leadership in VET depends largely on the contexts in which the leadership is exercised.

Five research questions are addressed:

- What changes have occurred in the roles and responsibilities of VET managers over the last ten years?
- What factors have brought about these changes?
- What are the current VET leadership roles and responsibilities?
- What are the claims on VET managers?
- How might VET leadership roles and responsibilities change in the next five years?

Data forming the basis of analysis for the study are derived from 49 survey and interview responses and case studies in 12 registered training organisations from a range of VET provision contexts around Australia. Leadership interventions in these contexts are explored through the case studies, and scenarios developed from the data. Four interventions are examined in detail and, in each case, effective leadership was seen to depend on aspects of the context in which leadership was exercised.

The study generated five main findings.

Finding 1

The effectiveness of VET leadership was found to depend on aspects of the particular practical situation which need to be changed through what is termed an *intervention*. Essentially, leadership in the circumstances of this study depends on how the leaders process ongoing change.

Finding 2

The study found that effective leadership in VET consisted of the relationship between three dimensions:

- internal *organisational* roles and responsibilities

- the external *environment* (such as learners, community, enterprises and policy)
- the characteristics and contribution of *individuals* who carry out leadership roles in the course of an intervention.

That is, effective VET leadership can be seen as a process of enabling interactions between internal, external and individual domains of activity, which requires knowledge and interpersonal expertise on the part of the leaders.

Finding 3

The study found that the characteristics of effective leadership were different for four identified stages of solving a problem (an 'intervention'):

Stage 1 the trigger stage

Stage 2 the initiating leadership stage

Stage 3 the developmental leadership stage

Stage 4 the sustainability stage.

It was evident that in all stages effective leadership was a collective process and a continuous one. Initially leadership was distributed between the core team, then spread to a wider (internal) group, and moved progressively to the broader stakeholders.

Finding 4

While effective VET leadership *can* occur through unintended means or simply by default, the evidence in this study suggests that effective VET leadership occurs *consistently* when the contextual factors are analysed and the required leadership profile is designed accordingly.

Finding 5

In response to a line of enquiry in the study about the ability to generalise 'leadership skills', it can be said with confidence that certain components of 'leadership' are 'generic', to the extent that they are perceived to be generally applicable across different situations. These components include interpersonal (including communication) skills, risk-taking, team-building and analytic and decision-making skills. However, these generic skills are found to be transferable only in situations where the contextual factors impacting on the leadership intervention are known and acted upon. To put it simply, it was found that generic skills are only as useful and transferable as contextual knowledge permits.

Conclusions

This study suggests that effective leadership in VET occurs where there is a relationship between the internal organisational roles and responsibilities, the external environment and attributes of the individual leader. The study highlights the importance of context in identifying VET leadership processes.

The study suggests the need for a more complex set of characteristics and processes of effective leadership over the next five years. There is a crucial role for leadership in actively *designing* learning, social, community and organisational futures rather than simply *responding* to existing

impacts or drivers such as 'policy'. VET leaders who *design* vocational education and training futures will have attributes such as:

- risk-taking, initiative and innovative behaviour
- networking, partnership and alliance building abilities
- a capacity for futuring—envisioning future trends, strategic resourcing, and being pro-active.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Part 1
Designing effective leadership interventions in VET

1 Introduction

The research in this report arose from the curiosity of the researchers about the question, 'how generic is generic'? That is, does effective leadership in vocational education and training (VET) comprise a set of attributes that can be transported from place to place, site to site or is effective VET leadership dependent to a greater or a lesser extent on aspects of the context in which it occurs? New research on 'enabling leadership' suggests that the effectiveness of VET leadership is largely dependent on aspects of the contexts in which the leadership is exercised. An ideal outcome for the study would be to suggest that VET leadership characteristics related to the contexts and people involved in leadership activities, and the professional development needs of existing and aspiring VET leaders in times of rapidly changing VET sites and delivery. To achieve this, the researchers use enabling leadership theory as a guide to the conceptual parameters of leadership.

The purpose of the study is to research the conditions for VET leadership in the coming years, and the characteristics of that leadership. In this way the foundations will be established for subsequent research into the specific management techniques and the concomitant competencies required. In this study therefore, leadership and management are distinguished from each other as defined later in this chapter. In addition, leadership is embedded in the notion of change. The 12 VET delivery sites selected for this study all reflect change of a radical nature, and leadership is seen as being a response to the various dimensions of change at those sites.

Context

The research in this study on leadership in vocational education and training includes an element of 'crystal ball gazing'. One of its aims is to attempt to capture the degree of diversity of VET provision, in the hope that an analysis of the diverse VET contexts will provide some scenarios of possible future VET leadership needs. We would like to be able to claim at the end of the project that, on the basis of present known diverse VET delivery sites, we can identify the specific VET leadership requirements for planning in new times. Since VET delivery sites are already diverse and are likely to become more so, contextualising the project requires a cross-disciplinary analysis of the literature associated with leadership. Literature from many sources and disciplines was gathered, and represents areas such as education, training, management, organisational development, economics, and other social sciences such as health.

Methodology

This study aims to build knowledge and theory on the topic of VET leadership in a range of diverse sites. The methodology required to fulfil this task is a theory-building one (for example, Glaser & Strauss 1967). Using purposeful sampling techniques (Patton 1990), criteria for site selection were established that would ensure the inclusion of a diverse range of VET providers.

Semi-structured interviews with VET managers and other people at different levels of responsibility, but regarded as having a leadership role in the organisation, made up the range of interviewees. In addition, group interviews were facilitated in some organisations to act as a cross-checking forum.

These groups included interviewees already the subject of one-on-one interviews, together with other staff members, such as team leaders, where possible to promote discussion.

Application of the criteria designed to identify different VET leadership sites established the following sites for the study:

- large urban public VET provider, high level of industry and commercial activities
- higher education VET provider
- youth-focussed VET provider
- dispersed and multi-campus regional public VET provider
- VET in a group training company
- industry-based VET consultant
- large urban public provider: equity focus (Indigenous, migrant)
- private training organisation
- Indigenous provider: non-registered
- rural community-based VET development
- equity VET group
- rural VET-in-schools program

The twelve sites which resulted fell into three broad groups: technical and further education (TAFE), other public providers (for example, VET-in-schools) and private providers. From each site, the researchers gathered a combination of document artefacts, written responses to a survey, and one-on-one and group semi-structured interviews. Four different means of analysing the data were adopted: thematic (manual and NUD*IST), tabulation, situational analysis and detailed micro-analyses.

A detailed description of the methodology used in this research is located in the appendix.

Definitions

'Leadership' and 'management'

This project is concerned primarily with the question of effective leadership in VET. Its purpose is identified in the project brief as investigating 'the leadership roles and responsibilities' in different VET settings. Usage of the terms 'leadership' and 'management' is often confused. Even experts in the area tend to use the terms synonymously. It is clear that the role of social (including economic) change as a context in which leadership occurs is crucial to its definition. What is less clear is the relationship between change (as a contextual influence) and leadership processes and practices. For instance, is good leadership in these new times simply a matter of being able to provide a flexible and agile organisational response to market forces and policy? Or is leadership more than a response?

Bennis and Nanus describe the difference between managing and leading in this way:

> To manage means to bring about, to accomplish, to have charge of or responsibility for, to conduct ... Leading is influencing, guiding direction, course, action, opinion ... Managers are people who do things right and leaders are people who do the right thing.
>
> (Bennis & Nanus 1985, p.38)

The idea of 'doing the right thing', the ethical dimension of leadership, is one that emerges as a key VET leadership attribute later in this study.

> … managers traditionally focus on the facility's internal operations and the basic functions of management: planning, organizing, coordinating, directing, and controlling. Leaders focus on the external forces that affect the facility's operations and future: markets, networks, customers, vendors, suppliers, legislative changes, and so forth. (Bennis & Nanus 1985, p.18)

It is in this latter sense that this study discriminates between the terms 'leadership' and 'management'. In this study, data about leadership have been sought primarily from a group of people in the VET sector commonly referred to as 'managers'. We will, therefore, use the term 'manager' in the study, but intend to avoid the confusion between leadership and management by adhering to the above definition.

'Leadership' and 'leaders'

Another key point of differentiation in this study relates to the initial perception of the researchers that 'leadership' was more than simply a 'bunch of generic skills' possessed by 'leaders'. The confusion in the literature is one indicator of this point (see chapter 2). Previous research from the Centre for Research and Learning in Regional Australia (CRLRA) established the importance of the character of *enabling leadership* and its connections to the *leadership event* (Falk & Mulford 2001) in identifying relevant and effective leadership attributes. A leadership event in an organisation refers to the set of interactions between managers and others which, together, form a coherent response to a problem or need over a period of time defined by a beginning, middle and end.

These events might also be called a leadership *intervention*, because the day-to-day activities of an organisation are changed in some way by a deliberate set of strategies designed to intervene, change and rectify a perceived problem or address a perceived need. The leadership event comprises the activities that occur over the period of time during which the intervention is operative.

'Context' and interaction

In this study, 'context' is defined as the sum of the impacts from internal and external sources on leadership at one VET site or organisation. For example, respondents may explain how the leadership demonstrated in response to a specific event was characterised by particular features due to the impact of an initiative, such as the introduction of 'user pays', training packages or a change to a team-based staffing structure. In this case, the contextual impacts or drivers would be classified as, for example, *policy* and *industrial relations*. Here, policy and industrial relations are seen as drivers of the nature of VET leadership. Together, these drivers or impacts make up the context. At another site, *industry* might be cited as a driver within that context, so industry would be classified as a contextual driver at that site.

Consistent with the project's aim to ensure a fresh yet empirical analysis of effective VET leadership, 'context' arises as a central issue for the study. What is the nature of the contextual factors that impact on leadership at each site? Which aspect/s of the context in which leadership operates impact on the intervention described at that site? How does this tie in with one of the study's assumptions that effective leadership is about facilitating change?

Research questions

Using these more general concerns as a basis, the study addresses five research questions, the answers to which are provided in chapter 3 and elaborated in detail in part 2 of this report:

- What changes have occurred in the roles and responsibilities of VET managers over the last ten years?

- What factors have brought about these changes?
- What are the current VET leadership roles and responsibilities?
- What are the drivers on VET managers?
- How might VET leadership roles and responsibilities change in the next five years?

Limitations of the study

The study is limited in the first instance by the funds available, and this had consequences for the sampling of those who participate in a VET leadership event. The literature on effective leadership reviewed in chapter 2 shows how leadership is dispersed, and is more than the prerogative of a single leader. In these circumstances, we would ordinarily seek a cross-section of personnel from all levels of participating organisations. In the case of small organisations this is not really an issue, since many of these have a flat hierarchy and small numbers of personnel. In larger organisations, VET personnel from the management levels, from middle-level to chief executive officer status, have been selected for the study. However, some effort has been made to balance this with addition of the focus groups, where participants from all levels were encouraged to participate.

Numerical summaries and tabulations using various forms of statistical checks are commonplace in qualitative research such as this, as evidenced in any text on the subject. Silverman (1997) devotes a large part of a chapter on validity and reliability in qualitative research to techniques for the incorporation of quantitative data into qualitative studies (pp.144–70).

Numerical and statistical work within qualitative studies is especially indicated in survey or questionnaire responses: 'Research … might … engage in survey research and employ the quantitative method of statistical analysis' (Crotty 1996, p.6). Statistics are used to summarise the responses. They are also used to make decisions about whether a theme or issue is more widely perceived, and to establish the relative importance of emerging themes in the views of the respondents. These outcomes provide guidance for further areas of investigation and analyses of the data within the study, and contribute to the construction of a fully developed view of the data.

Tabulations are not used in this kind of research to make generalisations to other sites. Only after all forms of analyses are complete is it possible to make claims about possible ways in which the findings for this study might apply elsewhere, but then only within the bounds of the limited data available and with the proviso of a certain degree of tentativeness. Claims made in findings for this kind of qualitative research are made in this tentative fashion, and should always be accompanied by additional research capable of confirming or rejecting the tentative nature of the qualitative findings.

At no time is licence taken for generalising more widely than across the 12 sites. Neither are statistical comparisons across sites made, beyond the formative summation of relative importance of possible issues and themes for further analysis using NUD*IST, other thematic analyses and case study analysis.

2 Literature review

Change and leadership

Some argue that the decades of change, improvement and reform have left many, consciously or otherwise, confused, exhausted and disillusioned (Deal 1995). On the other hand, Drucker (1989) as well as Redding and Catalanello (1994) remind us that 'a time for turbulence is also one of great opportunity for those who can understand, accept, and exploit the new realities: it is above all a time of opportunity for leadership' (p.10). Success in the VET sector in this decade at the start of the new millennium will depend on how well VET leaders understand and operate across different areas, areas such as their organisational roles and functions, the leadership processes in which they are engaged and their own, their organisations', their local communities' and their regions' shared values and visions (Falk 1999; Falk & Mulford 2001; Johns et al. 2000).

As the National Research and Evaluation Committee (NREC 2000) project brief for VET leadership states, there '... has been no work undertaken on management and leadership in VET institutes/private providers' (p.15). Perhaps the main reason for this is that the conditions under which managers and leaders are required to operate are something of a moving feast, being dictated in part by the forces of change. Conditions relating to institutional roles, VET professionals' roles, markets and demand factors seem to change almost every year, as policy strategies, institutional responses and pressures to respond to commercial and community imperatives change.

Every year, VET managers who have begun the task of establishing a regime of coherence and trust (public or private) within their organisations find that changed circumstances relating to the policy or labour market have undermined these conditions. As one senior TAFE institute staff member commented, 'We have been managed to oblivion, but led nowhere'. Certainty surrounding the conditions for leadership appears to be a thing of the past.

This climate of change has also brought with it new opportunities. A major area where leadership has been required has been in the developing of cross-sectoral collaboration and partnerships promoted under the policy framework of devolution. As noted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), in this evolving framework, fragmented structures become more systemic with support from a rich array of pathways, bridges and transitions to assist individuals accessing education and training on a whole-of-life basis (OECD 1996). In the context of lifelong learning for instance, the issues of cross-sectoral collaboration, particularly in pursuit of equity objectives, is inevitably linked to the question of partnerships between the education sectors and a wider range of community partners, with much learning occurring in social contexts outside education institutions (for example, in the workplace [OECD 1996]). Each of these new contexts requires its own unique form of leadership.

This broader range of partnerships in the VET sector includes those with community bodies, employers, industry associations, local government and economic development agencies, as well as with the learners themselves. For this reason cross-sectoral policies and strategies often have had two dimensions: vertical, with co-ordination of effort between the sectors of education and training, and horizontal, with collaboration and partnership development between the education sectors and other community groups (OECD 1996). National policy in Australia is now tending more and more to this devolved model in VET provision, with budgets and management structures now the

responsibility of TAFE institute boards of management and the chief executive officers themselves: a framework where all stakeholders are consulted and their involvement is an ongoing process. But it also needs to be recognised that these processes are still in their infancy.

The purpose of leadership in this new decade should therefore be concerned with fostering the conditions under which organisational goals can be achieved while still meeting the needs of the other VET stakeholders at community, regional and national levels. For example, few VET leaders would question the impact of their local industry and enterprise demands on local stakeholders, or the influence on their practice of their state, territory and national policy-makers.

One thing is certain, however, and that is that the conditions under which VET leaders will have to lead in the next 20 years will continue to change. Effective and sustainable leadership strategies for these conditions, and their resulting management implications, are the foci of research for this study.

Four kinds of leadership theories

Established texts on the subject tend to use a core of three established forms of leadership. These are the 'trait' theories, the 'behaviours' theories and the 'contingency' theories (Schermerhorn 1996, pp.323–31). Schermerhorn (1996) adds a fourth grouping, 'charismatic leadership', which includes transactional and transformational leadership types (pp.332–4). The field is evolving rapidly, and more recent approaches to leadership which build on existing work are consolidating. These new areas of theory, such as enabling leadership, critical leadership and ethical leadership, are being established as a direct response to the changing times in which we live. It has been found that older views of leadership are more relevant to the more stable socioeconomic conditions of a few decades ago.

Leadership as traits

Trait theories are those that distinguish the characteristics of leaders from those of non-leaders. The focus is on the 'leader' rather than on the contextual impacts within the locations in which leadership is enacted. Most media and opinion polls use traits as a basis for reporting popularity or voting trends. Two key researchers and writers contributing to this body of theory include Stogdill (1948) and Gardner (1988).

The focus of this group of theories is obviously on the leader rather than on the organisational or contextual influences at the site of the leader's activities or the leadership intervention.

Leadership as behaviours

This group of leadership theories highlights the functions, tasks or behaviours of the leader and assumes that if these functions are carried out competently, and members behaved rationally, the organisation will prosper. Key writers include Fairholm (1998), Leithwood and Duke (1999) and Sergiovanni (1996). Inherent in this group of theories is the notion of *leadership style* as a coherent set of leadership behaviours exhibited by leaders. Stogdill and Coons (1951) developed this theoretical thrust, as did Kahn and Katz (1960). The four best known so-called styles are summarised by Schermerhorn (1996, p.325) as directive/autocratic, participative/democratic, abdicative/laissez-faire and supportive/human relations leaders.

The focus is once again on *leaders*. It is not on *leadership* as a social and organisational *intervention* spread over a number of actors' actions or the impact of site-related contextual factors or drivers on the nature of that leadership.

Leadership as contingent

Contingent leadership focusses on leader behaviour and the situational attributes which illustrate how leaders respond to the unique circumstances or problems they face. Here leadership is seen as always situational and relational (Bolman & Deal 1991) and concerns the match between leadership style and situational demands (Fielder, Chemers & Mahar 1978). Schermerhorn (1996) notes that Hersey and Blanchard (1988) further develop this concept when they argue that 'successful leaders adjust their styles depending on the readiness of followers to perform in a given situation' (Hersey & Blanchard [1988] in Schermerhorn [1996, p.327]).

Leadership as charisma and transformation

The fourth group of leadership theories is a catch-all for some established strands of theory and research. There is *transactional leadership* (Burns 1978), developed by Bass (1985), a style of leadership which sees leaders as helping their followers to achieve outcomes through adjusting tasks, rewards and structures. *Charismatic leaders* (for example, Conger 1991) are those who inspire followers by engaging in special leader–follower relationships. *Transformational leadership* (for example, Gardner 1988) is leadership which inspires people to do more to reach performance goals and includes features outlined by Schermerhorn (1996, p.332) as:

- vision
- charisma
- symbolism
- empowerment
- intellectual stimulation
- integrity

It is clear from a number of the words in this list, such as 'vision' and 'empowerment', that we are approaching the leadership discourses of recent times, although there are some even more recent developments that are relevant for this study, noted in the following section.

Other strands of leadership research and theory

The literature review has identified additional strands of research, theory-building and practice including those described briefly below.

Gender and leadership is a strand of research and theory which has defined the gendered nature of leadership as a traditional and male-dominated set of activities (in the corporate literature, in any case). This work focusses on the differences in the leadership styles and attributes between the genders and the implications and effects of this (for example, Helgeson 1990; Rosener 1990).

Participative leadership de-emphasises visible top-down hierarchies and detailed scripts that dictate what followers must do. It stresses the decision-making processes of the group (Bolman & Deal 1991; Fairholm 1998; Leithwood & Duke 1999).

Learning leadership centres around the leader's fundamental or core values (O'Toole 1995) and could be summarised as learning (Argyris 1993; Dixon 1994). It arises from a re-analysis of the dramatic change we all face, including, as Howard Gardner (1995) argues, the possibilities of immediate or gradual world destruction, new forms of instant communication, the demise of privacy and the increased politicisation of public enterprises.

Critical and ethical leadership is a new and emerging field of development in leadership. The research is able to throw some light on the emergence of this style of leadership, as will be elaborated in the detailed analyses found in part 2 of this report.

Called *Servant leadership* because leaders' primary values concern serving others, this style of leadership was first mooted by Greenleaf (1977; 1996) and is seen as a leadership activity which is value-driven and performance-oriented on the part of the leader (Bass 2000). Farling, Stone and Winston (1999) argue that this strand of leadership runs parallel with transformational leadership and encompasses vision, influence, credibility, trust and service on the part of the leader or leaders. The needs of others are seen to be of primary importance, with the goal of enabling them to become servant–leaders.

Enabling leadership (Falk & Mulford 2001) has emerged as a contemporary leadership theory and construct. Enabling leadership puts the focus on the leadership processes themselves as implicated in a specific event related to strategic change. Leadership here is seen not to be the exclusive domain of one person but is constructed as a jointly owned, or collective, approach to managing a specific set of events identified by a common purpose. Its analysis therefore focusses on the specific leadership event or intervention sharing a common purpose, and its associated shared envisioning activities rather than on any single individual's vision. Because enabling leadership forms an important background to this research, it is likely to be reflected in the researchers' views on the subject. Furthermore, since it appears to be emerging as a response to the need for innovation in the new socioeconomic conditions of the new knowledge and learning economy (OECD 2001), we will devote the next section to expanding a little on its main concepts.

Enabling leadership

Enabling leadership research has grown from two imperatives: first, there is no body of leadership research that is Australian and based on Australian vocational education and training sites and data. Second, researchers such as John Gardner, in his introduction to an important summary of issues and challenges facing community leadership for the twenty-first century (Peirce & Johnson 1997), calls for a new kind of leadership for new times, yet does not tease out the empirical scope of such a concept.

John Gardner highlights some of the main requirements for leadership under the new circumstances:

> What we need, and what seems to be emerging in some of our communities, is something new—networks of responsibility drawn from all segments, coming together to create a wholeness that incorporates diversity. The participants are at home with change and exhibit a measure of shared values, a sense of mutual obligation and trust. Above all, they have a sense of responsibility for the future of the whole city and region. (Gardner 1988, p.vi)

Lesson 10 from Peirce and Johnson is called 'Keep your eye on the ball'. Their explanation is that:

> No success is ever final. After major community events such as carnivals or fairs, regions and cities cannot afford to be complacent. The community must be kept 'toned up' to respond to opportunities and keep the community capacity bubbling along.
>
> (Peirce & Johnson 1997, p.10)

John Gardner sets the scene for the research on enabling leadership, as he identifies boundary-crossing—working across sectors—as the key new element to leadership in new times. Leadership is multi-faceted and is about a situation rather than solely about the characteristics of 'a person'. The assumption in the research about 'enabling' and 'effective leadership' in the new times heralded by Gardner's comments is that the leadership is not approached from a predetermined 'this is the right way to do the job' stance. Rather, the action is situated in a particular moment and location with particular needs and particular planned outcomes which *enable* others by connecting them to one

another, to information and to their community. The situation is seen to require specific leadership needs, planning and outcomes. The situation itself largely determines the type and extent of enabling leadership that is involved.

Current research into enabling leadership (for example, CRLRA 2000; Falk 1999; Falk & Mulford 2001) identifies key qualities of the interactive processes involved in leadership, qualities which foster positive learning of knowledge and of identities, and so contribute to enhanced networks, relationships and collective action. These are:

- *Building internal networks:* Is the relevant knowledge of skills, information and shared or congruent values present for the purpose in hand?
- *Building links between internal and external networks:* How healthy are the links being built and maintained between the internal and external networks in the community?
- *Building historicity:* How effective is the building of and on shared experiences (including norms and attitudes) and understandings of personal, family, community and broader social history?
- *Building shared visions:* How systematic and inclusive of knowledge and identity resources (including norms, values and attitudes) is the reconciliation of past shared experiences with the desired future scenario/s?
- *Building shared communication:* How explicit and systematic are the communicative practices relating to physical sites, rules and procedures?
- *Building each other's self-confidence and identity shifts:* How explicit and systematic are the opportunities where these interactions occur?

Under these circumstances the role of leaders is seen to be one whereby shared values are negotiated and trust is developed (Fukuyama 1995; Greenleaf 1996). For example, the building of networks relies for its success on building trust between the network members, a clear leadership role (Falk & Kilpatrick 2000). Likewise, building trust between people as they share communication is fundamental to successful outcomes.

Finding out more about enabling leadership and the existing body of research and scholarship and associated conceptual elements in this area has provided a strong motivation for conducting this research. However, the research study has maintained an objective perspective and provided an integrated set of findings, while allowing a further expansion of the significance of enabling leadership in VET. For the first time in Australian leadership research, the analytic focus is on the process (event, intervention, situation) where leadership is exercised, rather than being solely on the person. The field of vocational education and training is a diverse and complex one. It is in the interests of this field to ensure that future leadership development is targetted to the conditions under which the leadership is likely to occur.

3 Findings and conclusions

This chapter presents the findings of the research and offers some conclusions vis-a-vis the research questions. Full details of the analyses are found in part 2 of this report.

Introduction

This study is concerned with the question of effective leadership in a changing VET environment. Its purpose is identified in the project brief as investigating 'the leadership roles and responsibilities' in different VET settings and the implications of these for educating VET leaders of the future. The project highlights the problem of the difference found in the literature between the leadership traits or style of a particular person designated as 'the leader', and leadership involved in the course of specific practical events, or *interventions*. The latter meaning of leadership can be likened to 'the leadership process'.

In each of the 12 sites across Australia the study focussed on the elements that impacted on VET leadership. Our aim was to identify the forces that drive vocational education and training in sites where different provider types operate and to determine how these elements impact on the effectiveness of VET leadership.

As noted in chapter 1, the five research questions chosen to tease out these more general issues are:

- What changes have occurred in the roles and responsibilities of VET managers over the last ten years?
- What factors have brought about these changes?
- What are the current VET leadership roles and responsibilities?
- What are the drivers on VET managers?
- How might VET leadership roles and responsibilities change in the next five years?

The study of VET leadership began with an explanation of the basic ideas informing the study and provides an outline of the methodology used. It is the task of the qualitative methodology for the research to build knowledge and theory about perceptions of effective leadership in various VET sites. Site documents, a written survey, and one-on-one and group interviews were conducted and the resulting data analysed using a multi-procedural approach.

The literature review relating to leadership found that there are four main strands consolidated in the literature: trait theory, behavioural theory, situational or contingent theory, and charismatic/ transformational theory. An extended and explanatory section on enabling leadership is included, as this concept was a major driver for the research project's focus and framing, stemming from recent research findings about the need for a new kind of leadership approach for the new and emerging sociopolitical and economic conditions of the first decade of the twenty-first century.

Summary of findings

In the first section of part 2 of this report, the results of the knowledge and theory-building are explained in some detail. Here also the research questions are discussed and answered. Results and discussion in this section establish that the roles and responsibilities of VET leadership in new times are defined in relation to specific practical situations, defined by their purpose and called interventions.

Interventions and effective leadership

It is during the course of these interventions that effective VET leadership occurs. From a very practical point of view, VET leadership takes place in the course of a particular and defined event, or intervention. This event or intervention is conceived in response to a local and situated perception that a particular situation needs to be altered in some way.

In practice, it is found that *effective* leadership occurs not only in relation to defined interventions but also in response to a collectively identified need. The intervention is not haphazard in its inception and development, but follows a particular staged structure. Effective leadership responses vary in their nature and demands at different stages of the intervention's progress.

It is found that leadership is vested in people through organisational dictates, but that this alone does not guarantee *effective* leadership. Effective leadership is found to consist of the interrelationship between three dimensions, all of which concern the knowledge and interpersonal expertise which enables interaction between:

- internal *organisational* roles and responsibilities
- external *environment* (learners, community, enterprises and policy)
- attributes of those *individuals* who collectively carry out individual leadership roles in the course of an intervention.

Most existing research, practice and professional development programs revolve around leadership as it pertains to individuals *only*, and de-emphasises the organisational and contextual attributes.

Moreover, we have identified a dynamic between the four stages of leadership intervention described below and the three dimensions of leadership noted above that impacts directly on the success of the outcomes of the leadership intervention. The four stages of leadership interventions have been found to be the 'trigger stage', 'initiating stage', 'developmental stage' and 'sustainability stage'.

We argue that effective leadership concerns the nature of an intervention rather than being solely a set of generic characteristics that are 'owned' by a single leader. Furthermore, effective leadership is not solely about a single leader or any one leader's particular 'style'.

Details of findings

As noted earlier in this report the findings and conclusions have been derived from 12 sites and 49 written survey and interview responses. They are drawn from a diversity of VET sites in all states from around the nation.

The study has been one that sought to generate new information, theory and knowledge in an area where before there was very little. There are certain but limited applications of findings under these circumstances. One such application lies in the detail available through such a methodology. Generaliseability in research such as this lies in the applicability of one case to another as perceived by the person making that comparison. The integrity of the research lies in the inherent accuracy of

the case as portrayed. That is, the features of a single case bear resemblances to other cases, and the lessons learned, or principles derived, may have direct transfer capacity.

Another important legitimate use of the data is to develop what might be called a 'model'. Such a model could be used to closely represent a set of principles for subsequent use, principles which have been abstracted from the available data and presented in words or diagrammatic form. While these principles are then available for further testing under different methodological regimes, they at least provide the guidance afforded by a rigorously derived method and set of procedures.

The findings of the study follow and are supported by the detail provided in part 2 of this report: these findings are synthesised and summarised from the results and discussion that occurs in part 2, which also indicates how the findings were derived.

Finding 1

The effectiveness of VET leadership is found to depend on aspects of the particular practical situation that need to be changed through what is termed an *intervention*. Essentially leadership in the circumstances of this study is about people processing ongoing change.

Finding 2

Effective leadership is found to consist of the interrelationship between three dimensions, all of which concern the knowledge and interpersonal expertise which enables interaction between:

- ✧ internal *organisational* roles and responsibilities
- ✧ external *environment* (learners, community, enterprises and policy)
- ✧ attributes of those *individuals* who collectively carry out individual leadership roles in the course of an intervention.

That is, effective VET leadership can be seen broadly as a process of enabling interactions between internal, external and individual domains of activity.

Finding 3

One aspect of the nature of effective leadership is that it is found to vary depending on the stage of any intervention.

Four stages to an intervention are found and identified:

Stage 1 *Trigger stage:* a fresh situational problem is identified or a new one emerges from stage 4 monitoring for new problems and/or scanning for opportunities.

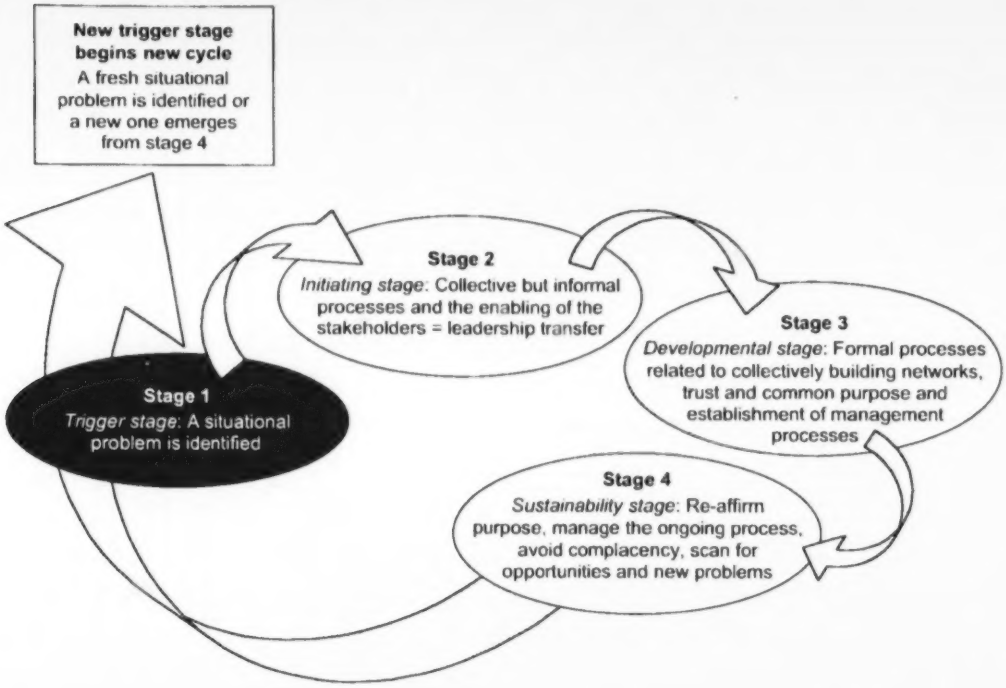
Stage 2 *Initiating stage:* occurs mainly through collective but informal means. This results in stakeholders being enabled to transfer leadership roles and functions to other personnel, including community and enterprise personnel.

Stage 3 *Developmental stage:* more formal processes related to collectively building networks, trust and common purpose, from internal bonding ties to external bridging ties; transfer of leadership functions continues from stage 2, enabling ownership of process and outcomes by non-VET personnel; developing management processes. This enablement provides the bridging activities to the sustainable outcomes of stage 4.

Stage 4 *Sustainability stage:* re-affirming the common purpose and managing the activities while avoiding complacency by scanning for opportunities and monitoring for new problems, with one possible outcome being the generation of a new stage 1 trigger stage; this new trigger stage may either adjust the old process or establish a new cycle.

The four stages of the intervention can be illustrated in figure 1:

Figure 1: The design of effective leadership interventions


New trigger stage begins new cycle
A fresh situational problem is identified or a new one emerges from stage 4
Stage 1
Trigger stage: A situational problem is identified
Stage 2
Initiating stage: Collective but informal processes and the enabling of the stakeholders = leadership transfer
Stage 3
Developmental stage: Formal processes related to collectively building networks, trust and common purpose and establishment of management processes
Stage 4
Sustainability stage: Re-affirm purpose, manage the ongoing process, avoid complacency, scan for opportunities and new problems

Finding 4

While effective VET leadership *can* occur through unintended means or simply by default, it can be suggested from the evidence in this study that effective VET leadership occurs *consistently* when the contextual factors are analysed purposefully and the required leadership profile designed accordingly.

Finding 5

In response to the line of enquiry for the study about the generaliseability of 'leadership skills', it can be said with confidence that certain components of 'leadership' are 'generic' to the extent that they are *perceived* to be generally applicable across different situations. These components include interpersonal (including communication) skills, risk-taking, team-building, envisioning, analytic and decision-making skills.

However, on close examination of the evidence available from this study, these 'generic skills' are found to be transferable only in situations where the contextual factors impacting on the leadership intervention are known and acted upon.

That is to say, in over-simplified terms, it is found that *generic skills are only as useful and transferable as contextual knowledge permits.*

Synthesised answers to the research questions

This section is designed to present, from the data analyses, answers to the five research questions in a synthesised and accessible manner.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

What changes have occurred in the roles and responsibilities of VET managers over the last ten years?

Corporatisation of the VET sector and its providers has had benefits and drawbacks. Chief benefits include a broadening of VET's client focus from VET learners alone to include business and enterprise and communities. Accountability for outcomes has increased, responsiveness to policy and strategies has increased. On the down side, casualisation of staff and the resulting management complications and lack of continuity of corporate knowledge have seen greater impediments to implementing the beneficial effects just noted.

What factors have brought about these changes?

The main factors facilitating these changes include collegiality and leadership in VET organisations, the policy and strategy environment, the changing client basis and issues related to globalisation and change. Critical social issues such as gender roles in leadership are also noted here as effecting change.

What are the current VET leadership roles and responsibilities?

Chief among the current leadership roles and responsibilities deemed important for effective VET leadership are knowledge and facility in carrying out internal organisational activities; networking the external environment, which consists of learners, community, business and enterprises and levels of policy bodies; and interpersonal transactions through engaging staff and clients in the interrelationships between the first two items.

What are the drivers on VET managers?

Summarised from the information answering the second research question, the five main groups of drivers have been identified as:

- collegiality and leadership in the VET organisations
- the national, state and local policy and strategy environment
- the changing client bases
- issues related to globalisation and change
- critical social issues such as changing gender roles, ethnicity and non-traditional client groups such as the unemployed.

How might VET leadership roles and responsibilities change in the next five years?

While the study finds important consequences for the need to view leadership as an intervention rather than a characteristic being the sole prerogative of individual leaders, nevertheless, the perception is that roles and responsibilities of individual VET leaders should have the ability to respond to the changed internal organisational and external environment through their:

- *character attributes*: consistency, ethics, integrity and control
- *networking, and partnership- and alliance-building*
- *risk-taking, initiative and innovation* in a climate of greater accountability
- *futuring*: vision, future trends, strategic response to anticipated needs and proactivity.

Implications

As noted, the major finding for this study is that effective leadership is not solely the province of a single leader, or indeed restricted to the outcomes of a single leader's 'style'. Effective leadership concerns an intervention that is purposefully designed to fulfil a perceived and collectively identified need. During the course of the intervention, leadership which produces beneficial outcomes for the stakeholders displays particular characteristics at different stages of the intervention. Effective VET leadership is a process of enabling interactions between internal, external and individual domains of activity.

For practice

Most existing leadership courses take place over a long period of time, usually a year or more, and involve a critical and ethical exploration of many sites and issues. Matters relating to gender, cultural and other differences and socioeconomic matters are explored. Usually involved are guest speakers from a variety of sectors and lobby groups. In this way the horizons of the potential leaders involved in the courses are expanded. Because the findings of this study relate to *leadership* (not simply *leaders*), this study has significant implications in several practical areas.

- ✧ Professional development for effective VET leadership should be designed to include those attributes of character, networking, risk-taking and futuring that are found in this study to enable interactions between internal, external and individual domains of activity. Leadership courses that rely solely on the matter of 'leadership style' are not adequate for the complex task of designing leadership solutions for strategic future interventions. No single leadership style is adequate to meet the requirements of the complex range of engagements implicated in a leadership intervention.
- ✧ For practitioners who are in leadership positions 'on the ground', the implications of this research are to adopt a 'situational analysis' approach to the task through the four-stage intervention process found in this study. That is, first trigger the identification of the problem and implement an investigation that analyses the boundaries and players involved. Second, analyse the processes and activities required to collectively identify the need and initiate the activities involved through informal means. Third, analyse and develop the intervention strategies collaboratively. Fourth, analyse the processes and practices required to ensure that the outcomes (as they emerge from the intervention) are not greeted with complacency but are part of a strategy for sustainability that is progressively owned by the stakeholders.

  If such a situational analysis approach is difficult or impossible to activate in an organisational context, then it is likely that enabling leadership is not sufficiently embedded in the organisation.

For further research

There are four identified needs for further research. All require knowledge-building with associated theory-building, since more needs to be known about both of these.

The first research need is to identify and document existing national best practice in leadership development with a view to applications in vocational education and training. In part this may already be under way through the TAFE Directors' Association parallel investigation.

The second research need relates to the dispersed nature of enabling leadership so that it is not the province of a single leader, but is transferred beyond VET personnel to build collectively owned and sustained outcomes. The research required is for a study into the specific needs of VET target groups who are affected by the changing nature of society yet who are not often thought to have 'leadership' roles. One such group is those learning by electronic means. This is a group that this study has not been able to target. Another such group is the socioeconomically disadvantaged,

where research is needed to establish ways in which their participation in leadership matters can be enhanced. A third group consists of community groups, agencies and individuals who have a vested interest in quality VET outcomes, but whose voices are not often heard.

The third area where research is required is for more detailed knowledge- and theory-building into the four stages of leadership and into accompanying leadership attributes of the situated interventions in a variety of VET sites.

The fourth area for further research is into the accountability and ethical dimensions of leadership of the future. In times when both risk management and litigation are increasing, the concept of ethics in the execution of effective leadership is a crucial one, because, as Kaye Schofield describes it, the risk-takers bear the brunt of any 'risky business'.

For policy

It is important for policy and strategy developers and implementers at national, state and local levels to ensure that initiatives for the development of leadership capacity in their communities of practice pay close attention to internal organisational dynamics and the various external and client environments as well as the individual leadership attributes described in this report. The findings of this study will demonstrate to policy-makers the benefit to VET outcomes of VET personnel participating in extended leadership programs which cover leadership situational analysis. Sending employees to a short-term leadership course is unlikely to address the required outcomes.

Conclusion

The study points to the crucial role for leadership as *designing* learning, social, community and organisational futures rather than simply *responding* to existing impacts or drivers such as 'policy'. Designing is a leadership function, while responding is a management function, a tension evident in both the literature and the data. The tension is between, on the one hand, the overpowering influence of policy and collegial concerns on the course of leadership interventions, and on the other hand, a clear recognition that these influences will not be resolved to the satisfaction of all concerned by simply responding or reacting to them. The reason for the inadequacy of a 'response' reaction is because risk-taking, envisioning and other non-reactive attributes of leadership are considered to be essential ingredients in designing vocational education and training futures. Accountability issues of both a legal and an ethical nature become paramount under these circumstances. But there is no escaping the fact that future strategic and effective leadership interventions are those which will produce leadership by design rather than by default.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Part 2
Results of detailed analyses

4 Leadership and context analyses

The aims of this study have been to investigate the contexts in which VET providers and managers operate, as well as the leadership roles and responsibilities of public and private providers within these contexts.

This chapter is designed to reflect the first of these aims—leadership and context analysis.

The main purpose of the study is to build knowledge and theory about VET leadership in a range of types of provider contexts to facilitate an examination of the perceived nature of effective leadership across the sites. This examination throws light on the relationship between context factors and effective leadership. Since this relationship between the nature of effective leadership and 'context' underpins the study, this chapter draws on the whole data set through a range of detailed micro-analyses and systematically reports on this relationship. Space precludes the reporting of the full range of responses, a common issue in qualitative research, and is addressed by first synthesising the elements of all responses, and subsequently focussing directly on the data from two cases. In this way, the coherence of the patterns from the responses is captured in the two scenarios.

Leadership constructs

Perceptions of effective leadership are captured from the full range of data, including the specific question that asked respondents to define their view of effective leadership. Responses were analysed using a manual thematic technique whereby groups of common characteristics were identified and subsequently named according to a number of key common criteria in the descriptors. The results of the initial thematisation were then scrutinised for opportunities to collapse categories coherently and re-form joined groups. The result of this process is summarised in table 1 then elaborated using qualitative extracts to illustrate the groups. It is noted that the four 'constructs' of leadership shown are tentative, given the small numbers.

Table 1: Categories of leadership constructs

Leadership construct	Frequency of occurrence	Construct of leadership determined by ...
Organisational and managerial leadership	23	Roles prescribed by organisation/ management function
Interpersonal	6	Relationships and engagement
Translational	5	Communicative necessity
Enabling	5	Collective responsibility

Source: Questionnaire item 12

The following sections draw on the data to illustrate the nature of these leadership constructs.

Construct 1: Organisational and managerial leadership

This construct contains the majority of responses, which are those reflecting meanings of leadership and expressed in terms of the relationship between the leader/s and the follower/s as prescribed by their organisations. That is, constructs of leadership are expressed in terms of managerial responsibilities and organisational dictates. Leadership is seen as one of the roles that the leader's management position entails. For example, one manager describes leadership as:

> ... managing staff, meeting targets, performance, targets.

Another manager says that their leadership involves:

> ... the day-to-day efficient running of the campus, the employment and induction of sessional staff and planning of programs. I attempt to be ... clear about policy and do my best to enforce and correct where necessary.

Managers also referred to the leader/follower aspect of organisational roles and responsibilities to construe leadership:

> I have to set an example for my fellow workers to follow ... Be strong and able to let staff know that you expect them to carry out duties that they are required to do.

Construct 2: Interpersonal

Construct 2 meanings of leadership are expressed almost wholly as engagement and relations with other staff members whether above or below in the organisational hierarchy. The data in this group include references to attributes such as the importance to effective leadership of being 'connected to people' and promoting 'good relationships'.

One manager expresses leadership as the capacity to:

> ... deal with people ... I'm really interested in people.

Another manager comments how the engagement of employees interpersonally is considered the major component of leadership:

> Leadership is the encouragement of each employee.

The interpersonal construct of effective leadership involves using communication to encourage and foster fellow workers.

Construct 3: Translational

In this construct, effective leadership is construed in terms of a translation function. That is, leadership is construed as translating one field of language and values into another. Normally this is reported in the context of a translation of a big-picture, social, funding or policy issue into operational terms that fellow workers and employees can interpret in their daily routine:

> Leadership requires that you see the big picture and look at the present and the future. Then you have to be able to translate this into each staff member's own contribution so they perform at their best.

Another senior manager relates the mechanisms of these translation activities in terms of language, including jargon:

> I happen to have a range of skills and knowledge that allow me to manipulate a system ... in such a way that it's going to be of benefit and value to the community. That's what I see myself as being: being able to speak the jargon and, you know, modify or ... fit my language to the context that I'm working in ... on behalf of the different groups and agencies.

Construct 4: Enabling

In construct 4, leadership is a process determined by the collective responsibility of all those involved in the activity. Leadership occurs when one person activates a process that enables others to assume aspects of the leadership as appropriate for their tasks in hand. One chief executive officer described it this way:

> Leadership is about enabling people to develop and grow within an environment of increasing complexity and change. It is about a reason for people to want to accept responsibility and accountability. It is about controlled devolution in an environment where managers have diminished power and authority and real leaders must develop a climate of trust.

Another describes enabling leadership as:

> … a shared leadership approach where giving other staff opportunities to lead is seen as a cohesive leadership style …

How does 'leadership' interact with 'context'?

In this section we provide a brief overview of the contexts involved in the study in relation to their perceived interaction with leadership factors. Following this overview, two scenarios are described, offering specific and detailed context analyses. These two scenarios document the importance of leadership's responsiveness to the aspects of change in the contexts and draw out the stages in a leadership change cycle.

Context and leadership

The data utilised in this section originate from a one-on-one question where all respondents were asked to describe in detail an experience that required a leadership response to change in their context. All experiences are therefore related to a change of some kind and the accompanying leadership is described in terms of its impact on that cycle of change. This kind of cycle of change we call an event or an *intervention*. Where the intervention is discussed in connection with leadership, we will refer to it as a *leadership intervention*. In many of the experiences related here, 'leadership' is interpreted personally by the respondents. They are describing their own experiences as a leader in a particular intervention. These perceptions of a leader will then be balanced by the leadership process documented as interventions in the scenarios.

Context as community knowledge

In the case of a rural training development intervention, the respondent saw the intervention in terms of a whole-of-community approach to its development. The aim of the intervention was one guided by a vision of the goal:

> … looking for perhaps tourism ventures or work ventures.

The relationship of the leader's role in this intervention is explicit:

> But my input was really saying, 'The biggest plus you've got is your human capital, your human resources'.

Leadership is seen as dependent on skills and understanding of that specific community as a whole in being able to facilitate a community-wide response to strategic training and education. In this example, context is interpreted as community of place, and leadership is seen as how the leader handles effecting the vision of developing industry. Strategies begin as opportunities to get together:

> … to come together, share a meal, open a barn and have a night and this was just for no other reason than just meeting together socially.

These opportunities gave the community members a chance to see that they can use:

> ... this sporting community promises to bring education and training back to the community [and that will] help [strengthen] the fabric of the [community].

The importance of contextual knowledge for the success of this leadership intervention is underscored in the statements about using the community's core values as levers to a successful and sustainable outcome:

> How can we build that [training facility] so we pick up some of the very core values of that district in that community? [Through] values, I guess, using [my] prior experience to pick up their past and take them on further.

Context as business knowledge

This example of a leadership event is described by a private provider (one of the new apprenticeship centres). The manager in question was considered to be in a leadership role, and on this occasion the role was to present the business profile of the new apprenticeship centre to enterprise:

We have a new apprenticeship centre and they went out to market the services to an employer.

A managerial colleague describes the leadership issue as being one of a lack of analytic skills and knowledge demonstrated by the leader in the field during this event. Leadership here was a business issue affecting the bottom line at the client interface. The manager in the field represented the benefits of a government-subsidised scheme in a way that was apparently incorrect and, as a consequence:

The employer missed an opportunity that would've saved him significant time and money. Because of the nature of what we do, we missed the opportunity of getting another two or three people into employment with us so that we could then manage it. I guess what that probably indicates is perhaps a lack of leadership in the way that our services are marketed holistically.

The context is an enterprise, and the perceived leadership issue related to analytic skills and knowledge of the enterprise and the relevant financial benefits accruing from various government policy initiatives.

Context as organisational knowledge

The organisational setting of this case is similar to that in the previous case in that both relate leadership issues to their organisational context, yet the relationship and associated knowledge and skills differ widely between the two cases. This example describes the organisation involved in the successful implementation of a management approach called 'matrix management'. The associate director of a large and dispersed TAFE institute described the effect of these initiatives:

> This matrix management arrangement meant that you had, say for example, a delivery team of delivery team A, and in delivery team A you would have responsibilities for things like human resources, finance, facilities, stores. All those kinds of things would be spread across that delivery team. So in addition to doing teaching and administrative work that the team were involved in, they also had to manage all of those other things for their team.

In operational terms, this meant that:

> ... to get a meaning from staff on any particular aspect of that particular delivery team I would have to deal with different people, depending on what the question was, right? I had to then ring so-and-so for something to do with recruitment, I'd have to ring somebody else about finance and I may get two different answers but it may be about the one mission ... so it was really frustrating from my point of view to get answers. If I wanted an answer I'd have to get the whole group together, and kind of piece it all together.

The leadership approach to the intervention of managing the matrix management involved first analysing the organisational situation and its relationship to cultural differences. This approach afforded an understanding of the reasons why matrix management was imperfectly embedded in the organisation:

> I used to sit there and then it dawned on me, you know, that people from Western society have been nurtured and socialised into a hierarchical system of decision-making, you know, everything to do when it's the way people are socialised is about a hierarchical system of power, whether it's in the family, whether it's in the community, or in the school. So to then take a group of people that are used to that and are used to that hierarchical system and say well you're all equal now and let's make the decisions collectively, a lot of people were finding it difficult to do.

One solution was put to an executive staff meeting:

> So I've raised that at the executive meeting, and said maybe we should actually run some workshops to assist people to get them outside that hierarchical way of thinking and operating to get into this collective decision-making. Well, the conversation fell on deaf ears …

To overcome the difficulties associated with the use of matrix management, the assistant director implemented a synthesised strategy within her own section as a way around the wider organisational obstacles:

> [I did] something different to the rest of the institute [and it] goes against this flat management system. So the options are you can forfeit one of your positions whether it's the teaching position, the administrative position or whatever, you can forfeit one position, right, and I'll create, do up some position descriptions and what have you for a program manager's position, but it's not going to be able to cost you any more money. I can't get any more money to fund this position. You have to make the decision about whether or not you want to sacrifice one of your positions. That person then will be responsible for doing the administration, the negotiations with myself and setting targets [and so on].

In this case, the knowledge of the organisation and the way it operated was not of much assistance by itself, although her role meant that this was the first option to be considered. The associate director had to solve the problem at her own departmental level by knowing the organisational rules and roles intimately, understanding personalities and cultural differences and the implications of those differences, exercising her organisational authority, working with the leader/follower structural role and against the 'flat management' regime, breaking the 'rules' of the matrix management structure—all while maintaining an apparent negotiated outcome.

Context as interpersonal knowledge

Implementing training packages was the intervention, and interpersonal connectedness was how this middle-level manager led the event. The example explored here was how this manager approached the leadership of this intervention in the organisational unit (called the 'centre' here):

> The implementation of training packages, I think that required very strong leadership for anyone managing a centre where … implemented because of the complexities of the changes and the way that there was no consultation—and the disappointment with the packages that turned out to be empty boxes, not packages at all.

Leadership for this manager is about applying the 'soft skills':

> I think that there's specific leadership skills that I would say are the softer skills that were really important in implementing that change.

The respondent's description of the intervention's leadership attributes was peppered with terms such as 'connectedness', 'connected to people', 'find a friend', 'good relationship' and 'confidante'.

However, the so-called soft skills have particular attributes, according to these reports, and these attributes are not so soft. Understanding how to provide resources such as space, time and physical resources is one aspect of applying interpersonal skills in this leadership intervention:

> They [soft skills] were being able to give people space and time to understand things, facilitating situations so that at a time when they were feeling very vulnerable they'd feel valued. If you can have people feeling happy about coming to work you've solved most of your leadership and management problems.

Helping people feel valued is not simply a matter of 'being nice', however. There are resourcing questions:

> Probably, in terms of the training packages, my focus was on people feeling that they were resourced well enough to take it on board, and find out all about it and know what it is and get a chance to control it themselves, because they felt very out of control, in a context where they felt valued.

And the outcome?

> And that was pretty successful. In a sense we had a minimum of problems given the whole system's a dud anyway. But in terms of the actual implementation of it for what it was, it went pretty smoothly.

It is clear from these snapshots of leadership interventions that the form leadership takes in each case is perceived in a quite different light in each intervention. In the case of a rural training development intervention, leadership is seen as dependent on skills and understanding of that specific community as a whole being able to facilitate a community-wide response to training and education. In another, leadership comprises skill and knowledge of the mission and directions of that specific provider company in identifying business opportunities. In a third case, leadership is knowing the specific provider well enough to find organisational and management solutions to given situations while using structural leadership roles to bring about the desired intervention. In the fourth case, leadership in VET is about knowing people and how to relate to them in that specific provider context in order to create interpersonal connectedness to facilitate the training package implementation.

In all cases, the success of the leadership intervention was dependent on detailed and specific knowledge of the context to enable certain aspects of that context to be steered in a different direction. The managers report a different approach in each example, including facilitating community get-togethers, the manipulation of organisational structures and interpersonal approaches.

Detailed scenarios

From this overview of different contexts and the way leadership relates to them we move to the detailed progress of two leadership cycles of change which document the progress of two leadership interventions. Each clearly shows the different stages involved in leadership interventions and how leadership varies at each stage.

Scenario: A TAFE campus leadership intervention

In other sections of the report we explain how leadership has been impacted by change. Unfortunately, some of these impacts can be deleterious and relate to internal factors, such as organisational structures not geared to contemporary needs, flattened structures, a culture of blame and industrial relations issues. Some are related to poor interpersonal and people-management skills. Several are concerned with external factors such as policy/strategy shifts, decreasing resources, casualisation of work and competition.

In this scenario an effective leadership intervention is reported. It is set in one small and quite isolated campus of a large and dispersed TAFE institute. The purpose of the scenario is to document the features of leadership required at different stages of an intervention, as well as to illustrate how effective leadership in this case has originated from a whole-of-organisation approach to enabling leadership.

The large and dispersed public VET provider has an underlying ethos of collective leadership fostered during the term of the present, but soon-to-retire, chief executive officer. The chief executive officer's philosophy of leadership is reflected in his words, also cited earlier to exemplify the 'enabling leadership' construct:

> Leadership is about enabling people to develop and grow within an environment of increasing complexity and change. It is about a reason for people to want to accept responsibility and accountability. It is about controlled devolution in an environment where managers have diminished power and authority and real leaders must develop a climate of trust.

The experience of one of the chief executive officer's middle-level managers, who will be called Jenny, is used to illustrate the positive effects of an enabling approach to leadership. The chief executive officer places a great deal of emphasis on developing a climate of trust, and there are several examples of the language of 'trust' in Jenny's discussion of the importance of trust:

> If you have not built up that level of trust in the relationship and a degree of loyalty and commitment then I think that you really are in trouble, and what happens is that if you don't trust and you haven't built up that relationship or you haven't built up the understanding about obligations or commitment then what I think happens is, it actually affects the way you deal with those people … then you can be perceived by them as not being trusting.

If there is to be an indication of what the chief executive officer refers to as an 'enabling leadership' environment, we need to explore the outcomes of Jenny's actions when she took over the leadership of this small campus.

Stage 1: Trigger stage—identifying the situational problem
It was a job, as she says:

> … that nobody wanted, it was a job in which other people … in which other people had failed.

It is noted that the situation was not a new one, but had existed for some time. This shows that stage 1 can be part of a cycle of interventions. It will be seen in stage 4 that building in a cycle of scanning for opportunities and monitoring for new problems can both keep the players alert and on target and allow a leadership design process based on the cycles of intervention.

The situation appeared to be bleak. Around 70% of the staff of the campus had been lost in the downsizing. The potential learners (clients) in the district were perceived as demanding in terms of their diversity:

> We had diverse communities to service, but clients whose patterns for studying had changed dramatically. So all the worst aspects … were there in terms of … our business. We were distanced from [the main campus]—I mean not just in distance but in terms of relationships.

As well as relationships with the main campus being poor, staff morale was also rock bottom:

> Nobody [from the main campus was] interested, so it was really a, quite a nasty, down spiral, to the point where, even when I first started, my staffer said to me, 'Oh we're just waiting for our yellow envelope'. So that was … the challenge of that situation—to stop people thinking that there was going to be a yellow envelope appearing … There was no way we were going to survive if people kept on thinking those things.

The courses had been appropriate, but the delivery and numbers were not, an indication that relationships with the community were also poor:

> Attracting people to a particular course delivered in a traditional style is no longer happening, no longer happened … things were not going right in any capacity … The actual types of programs were pretty attractive actually but we just couldn't get the numbers that we needed.

Stage 2: Initiating leadership stage—informal processes and collectively addressing the need
Jenny brought a staff member from the main campus. This person, Emma, formed a team with Jenny, and the two members of the team displayed complementary leadership qualities:

> She influenced me. So it was a leader influencing somebody else. Because she was a leader … she'd got me onside. She'd got me thinking about the opportunities and so what I did was reinforce her views with teams of people and started examining the options and possibilities.

But leading change is not a simple or quick process. Hence the need for a period of consolidation and development, as outlined in the next stage.

Stage 3: Developmental leadership stage—formal networking and other processes
Jenny recognised the need to take small steps and gradually build a culture of credibility and trust so that staff could begin to see that change was possible and even desirable:

> We weren't going to change everything overnight. [That] was quite impossible because people couldn't change overnight. What they needed to see was that one change would work [well], and if they can see one successful change they [could go on].

The following segment of Jenny's retrospective analysis of the situation, and the interrelated processes she adopted to address them, is a combination of small and larger considerations. The small consideration includes renaming the classes 'sessions'. One major and large consideration is the informal policy of meticulously building strong ties between the staff to establish and reinforce the common purpose of the intervention. Jenny summarises some of these strategies in the following extract:

> We stopped calling them classes and we called them sessions … we started to change some of the terminology. And, and … we took off manageable chunks, had a go at it. [We were also] monitoring all this progress, [finding out] how were the clients going. It was different, but you know we could cope, making sure that we had some sort of relationship with [the main campus] because there were other people—peers—who could support and reinforce what I was then saying … So there was a lot of … relationships that needed to be, you know, constructed. A lot of persuading and encouraging our other people who had an influence in the community to accept our new ways and see that they actually did work, recognising there were other ways of doing, of going about our business, testing it all the time, testing every move we were making … We would talk every lunch time—not just once a fortnight, but every lunch time—about how things were going. So we were just nipping little things in the bud all the time. Now in retrospect I'm really glad that we did it that way.

Stage 4: Sustainability stage—solving problems, avoiding complacency, scanning for opportunities and monitoring for new problems
Change, as Jenny knew from the start, is not an easy process to lead. Once the basic processes are in action leadership is far from over. In fact one of the biggest pitfalls in an intervention such as this is complacency—'well, we're under way. Now we can rest'. Even after a year, Jenny was aware of the need for ongoing strategies and leadership to ensure the emerging outcomes became sustainable:

> … it took us probably the best part of a year to really make … where people were onside, feel positive. As they became more positive and more students appeared and more students came through the system—and [the staff were] quite unscathed, then the staff felt, well you know, 'I feel secure, actually, because there are a lot of students, and if there are a lot of students well I've got my job'. So then they started feeling a bit more positive and that sort of led to

> [looking] at some other suggestions and then some of their own suggestions were coming forward you know: 'Well what do you reckon, how do you think it's going to go, any other opportunities, what about?'—so a lot of exploring of ideas.

It can be seen how the cycle of leadership never really stops when viewed against a particular intervention such as the one described here. The success of the intervention as judged from the period covered by the data presented here is underpinned by the assumption that effective leadership is a continuous process and a collective one. Leadership is not the property of one person, but a process distributed between (initially) the core team, then spreading to a wider (but internal to the organisation) group, moving progressively from these bonding ties to network with the broader stakeholders. Thinking back to the time when Emma came to talk to her about 'flexible delivery', Jenny herself says:

> Even now I can say it wasn't just about flexible learning. It wasn't about that. It was about people looking at different things that they could do and actually having some encouragement to go and say things … rather than someone saying, 'Well this is how you are going to do it'. That was the old way.

Summary

It would appear that the ethos of enabling leadership espoused by the chief executive officer of this organisation has been adopted by others in managerial positions. Jenny's case shows marked stages in the progress of the intervention, as suggested by the subheadings through the case study. These are (1) trigger stage, where the situational problem is identified, (2) initiating leadership stage, occurring through informal means, (3) developmental leadership stage, with more formal processes related to building networks, trust and common purpose, from internal bonding ties to external bridging ties, and (4) sustainability stage, whereby the common purpose and activities are affirmed while avoiding complacency.

Scenario: VET-in-schools intervention: Enabling and distributed leadership

In this scenario, the data from the previous scenario are incorporated into the development of the life span of an effective leadership event or intervention. This intervention is a VET-in-schools initiative which has been operating for many years, and has therefore been able to build up sufficient history for others to learn from its experiences. The scenario is reported in a different way from the previous example. It appears in the form of a chart in landscape format (figure 2) and makes the stages of the intervention as clear as possible. The chart format allows the implications of the various stages to be shown left to right across the pages, for leadership issues, resourcing and staffing. The researchers' notes are in italics, while the plain text comprises data from the participants' experiences. Each stage should be read from top to bottom.

This initiative began when a teacher was appointed to a rural school. He noticed early that there was only a 25% retention rate between Years 10 and 11. He teamed up with another interested person, a woman who later (and fortuitously) gained a position at the local TAFE college which had, until that time, seen itself and the school competing for the same market.

Figure 2: VET-in-schools leadership intervention life span and leadership implications

STAGE 1	STAGE 2	STAGE 3	STAGE 4	RESOURCE SUMMARIES
Trigger stage: Identifying the situational problem afresh or picking up new problem from stage 4 of the intervention cycle	**Initiating leadership stage:** Informal processes Collectively identifying the need (fewer physical resources needed than in stage 3, but more qualitatively appropriate resources e.g. flexibility)	**Developmental leadership stage:** Formal processes Greater resources, flexibility in human and physical resources	**Sustainability stage:** Solving problems, consolidating, achieving outcomes, avoiding complacency, scanning for opportunities and monitoring for new problems to feed back into stage 1 cycle (continued large resources, more for networking and common goal reaffirmation = better outcomes)	
Start of intervention I got promoted to this position here and instantly recognised we had a problem with retention. *Identify problem* There was a 25% retention rate from Year 10 to 11. The other thing we had to identify was, okay, well what can we do for these people? We were looking at VET in particular because these were the vibes we were getting from the people.	*Not the initiating action of one leader* I was probably the main person that started [it], but I had a lot of other people saying, '[It's] a great idea, we'll support you'. At the very first, there was like the Council and my principal and an offsider of his and they all said, 'Well look, you do it, but we'll look at it'. *Building common purpose process essential for 'bonding ties'—network building* The first thing we did was actually to talk to the industry and ask them [about] their perception of young people in the community. This was at [the enterprise level] in particular, so I talked to the manager at the time, and his view was that they have real difficulty in recruiting young people to entry-level positions from the community, because they didn't have good job-keeping skills. To start with that would be the main focus. And secondly, it was the basic enterprise skills.	*Learners as partners* … because they're adults basically, we treat them as adults. *Collaboratively develop common purpose by melding shared values* We all came together to form the network and then I suggested, all right, if we're all going to come together as providers why don't we bring all the students together in at the beginning of the year as a general induction to the campus, so all the students are getting exactly the same message. *Identity as participants with common purpose* To give them, well, firstly, to give my open-learning students a sense of belonging (*bonding ties, identity*) rather than one student sitting in a classroom in [another town], trying to do things by themselves with the support teacher but nevertheless get them to feel they belong to a group and they were students from [this school]. And the second one is to actually, to get the students to get that sense of belonging but also [continued next paragraph]	*Complacency is the enemy* She was a driving force. I guess that whole thing which culminates in [specific activities] was brought about by my desire to get everyone working on a common goal. *Transfer of leadership (enabling) and ownership of process and outcomes outside VET personnel alone* … so we all had to sell the idea to [the industry training advisory body manager], that this is what we needed, because I'd built up the good relationship with him by being successful. He could say yes, all right, and he could also see me, he recognised that the need was there, then when that environment was set up whereby it was seen to be coming from the industry as opposed to just from me—well, me and [this school]—then the [TAFE] college could come online, so the goal was met. Things have changed. We don't call ourselves [name of high school] any more. We call ourselves Waterside Training Services; we call ourselves that because we've now got people to come here who were getting ribbed about going 'back to school'. So yeah, we changed names.	*Organisational agility for staffing* I've actually had to be freed up from some of my direct teaching and we've had to bring someone else in. *Outcome: demand and access grow* … bigger numbers of certificate 1 trainees. *Efficient use of physical resources* … share some resources [co-ordinate sending] students out on work placement. I suggested okay, well what we need to do is to sit down and get some protocol developed between the two [providers].

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

STAGE 1	STAGE 2	STAGE 3	STAGE 4	RESOURCE SUMMARIES
Capacity element—transition to initiating stage … so [I] set about picking a few [people] to help get the program up and running.	*Common purpose process distils need, enabling leadership and transfer of leadership* We then realised we had two needs. We had a need for our students, and the industry had a need. And so the process that I undertook was to convince the department that those needs were real and that there were people prepared to do something about it. *Network building around common purpose* The first object was to actually develop a network so we weren't all operating in isolation—that we were operating together in terms of avoiding clashes with work placements so the industry wouldn't be overloaded. We made sure that the industry was getting the same message about the purpose of these programs, because they had been getting different messages [from two competing VET providers]. [The other VET provider, a senior high school, was] taking over the certificate of work education, generic course. And the industry didn't particularly like that. If they're going to be going out of their way to support the programs, they wanted them to be industry-specific programs so they would get some benefit out of it. *Collaboration means cost-efficiency and resource rationalisation* At the beginning [the industry training advisory body manager] was an unknown. He was slightly sceptical because he couldn't see how a small school with limited facilities could do this. We were saying, 'look we don't need facilities because we've got a marine farm here, a marine farm there, and a boat'. So that's it and it's through the success of our program that our relationship with [the industry training advisory body manager] has got better. He's seen now—'Yeah, well these guys can do it', so that's helped a lot.	*Clear message aligned to needs* … so that they all get the same sort of message from the industry people about what their expectations of the program were, so, we set up sessions where [industry and enterprise personnel] would give a presentation about career paths and training pathways and we've got group training companies in to talk, sign kids up, the ones that can make that step. *Aligning the partners around common purpose (building shared ownership)* We then have tours of the industry sites so that they knew exactly what happens and a general induction to the whole industry. But what it also did—probably solely due to the relationship [my team partner] and I had developed from working together here—we got the senior high school aligned with us as well … *Formal network* The actual network, I suggested it to [the industry training advisory board manager], and he set it up, so I guess you could say it was my idea but he did it. *Collective meeting: search conference* We had search conferences. We brought all the industry people together, we got the people from the department together including [the senior high school] *Competition* … well [the senior high school] saw us as a competitor. We weren't, because at the time those students weren't going to [the senior high school]. They were staying here so they wouldn't have gone there anyway. We brought all the parties together to nut out the issues … *Policy strategies that target local solutions have flexibility* … even though the department was still resistant, the only reason we really got it up and motoring [metaphor] was because [the enterprise] said they needed it. And that swayed it. So from there I've been leading the project to where it actually is. It was the first rural VET program in [junior secondary] schools in [this state].	But [the industry training advisory body manager] could identify a need in his own industry and I think that's one of the main things. We try to drive into our students that this is an enterprise program and I guess it is a leadership quality that someone needs to identify the need. *Whether it works in practice* … depends on the structure that the leadership or the management of the business or organisation sets up. So it does come back to the leader as well. *Benefits to resourcing and achieving outcomes* … so now there is a lot more sharing of resources and that antagonism which wasn't just coming from—it was being driven by the particular teachers [continued next paragraph] *Competition* … but it was also coming from the VET development officers in the [senior high school] saying, 'We don't like these rural ones because they're poaching our numbers'. We would put up suggestions that we might share some resources or [co-ordinate sending] students out on work placement. I suggested okay, well what we need to do is to sit down and get some protocol developed between the two [providers] so that we all know when our work placement times are, so that the industry knows who's coming and where they're from. Look we're starting to get bigger numbers of certificate 1 trainees now. We're starting to have an impact. We need to have some sort of common purpose [between the VET providers] and there needs to be a lot more communication.	*Shared resources* … so now there is a lot more sharing of resources. *Researcher opinion* Not necessarily more cost-effective but more efficient and achieves outcomes.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

5 Leadership roles and responsibilities

The second aim of this study was an investigation of the leadership roles and responsibilities of public and private providers within the various contexts. Here, the results of chapter 4, 'Leadership and context analyses', are synthesised with the remainder of the data set. This chapter is structured so that the analyses are combined to become answers to the research questions. Each section contains tabular data and/or comments from respondents as necessary.

Research questions 1 and 3

What changes have occurred in the roles and responsibilities of VET managers over the last 10 years? What are the current VET leadership roles and responsibilities?

Over the last ten years changes to roles and responsibilities have been significant for all provider types. The most notable changes chiefly relate to the corporatisation of the public providers and the need for all providers to make constant business adjustments in the frequently changing policy environment. These changes are integral to the role of educators as well, who now count among their responsibilities financial and enrolment-seeking functions.

Corporatisation broadens client focus and financial roles

In the last decade or so corporatisation of public sector organisations has occurred across all sectors and with it the move to a flatter management structure and the creation of work teams. The move has had both benefits ('it's really snapped a lot of staff within colleges and institutes into the twenty-first century') and drawbacks according to the reports:

> We've moved away from the traditional hierarchical management structure to flatter management structures and that's certainly in many respects improved the quality of management and leadership. There's also been some downsides to that too.

Another provider describes the change as follows:

> The problem in a lot of educational institutes at the moment is that, because of funding constraints and the national competition policies, we're being forced to run the businesses in a more businesslike way, which is quite different to the old [way].

In VET, roles and responsibilities of staff in private providers are just as affected by the moves to a business model:

> Competition has forced us to think more like a business rather than a public service agency, and thinking as a business we've suddenly taken on board the reality that, you know, our business is about those customers that we've got out there and delivering the service that those customers want.

Previously, where the public purse paid for education and training, now user-pays policies have impacted on all sectors, as noted by this rural provider:

> A lot of the extension [training] work was done on a free basis. The actual technical people went out and shared information with the communities, with the farmers, with the different groups. And now it's a very strong user-pays criteria that has been put in, to the extent that we're looking for private work rather that just being a government agency.

Agencies such as this represent the interface between government and community, and their role now includes mediation because of their divided role as both public and private providers:

> So what's been imposed through policy—we find that we're in the firing line of saying, 'Well, that's where it is'. We're finding ways to work through that so we can still maintain relationships with the community.

Before, there was little concern about where the resources would come from. Now, in the case of public providers, the new corporate model of operation brings with it dilemmas and issues related to their dual business and public provider roles. For example:

> This institute has been struggling for years to be financially viable, operating within an environment which is quite complex. [For example], a business decision in relation to this institute [is that] we have separate campuses. If I came in as a straight-out business manager or major executive out of a corporate organisation and people asked me, 'How are you going to fix the business here?'—well I would simply close down campuses, just like that. I mean that's the way to fix it. But you can't do that because we are still a public service agent and we still are required to deliver a government service, the government policy and the government initiative. And a lot of that is about social justice and equity.

While a corporate model has had benefits in terms of client focus and resource management, the respondents illustrate how the public provider role has been subjected to a great deal of strain. Another frequently noted by-product of the organisational response to the move to corporatisation is a loss of staff continuity and morale, with the resultant challenge of building a vibrant and responsive organisation under the dual public/corporate identity:

> To create the level of employment for those people in that sort of environment is significantly different from the way it used to be. [There is] a larger amount of risk-taking.

One substantial change between ten years ago and the present time is the capacity of the provider organisation to respond to change. Once, this would not have been required whereas now it is essential. When asked to offer their experience on the changes that have occurred over the last ten years, the most common response of respondents related to the changed nature of their organisations in the context of the pace of change and changed socioeconomic conditions. The comparison between the way things used to be, and the way they are now, is captured in this chief executive officer's words:

> The thing that wasn't there before was the sort of change management, because we didn't change very much. So the pace of change and constant change and constant restructuring is obviously something we didn't have to deal with before.

Changes regarding implementing policy and strategy

It is perceived that both public and private providers are now more in what they see as implementing government policy, whereas 'before' their business was more homogeneous and more stable over time. Public providers have a legal responsibility to implement policy, while private providers must do so if they are to receive government funding, to award certificates and to receive accreditation as training providers.

For most providers the last ten years have involved implementing policy and strategy changes, most notably what was known broadly as the training reform agenda, which included the change to competency-based training, and more recently training packages and 'a lot of emphasis on flexible delivery, self-paced learning'. One respondent compares 'then and now':

> We've been working on a national approach in VET for a decade or more—a national approach. But that goes back to the time when teams and individuals weren't expected to know about that stuff. When I started in TAFE you didn't have much to do about or know about the national agenda.

A private provider discusses the impact of policy on their roles and activities:

> The economic policy or government policy on finances has had a fairly big impact …

Other responses to policy/strategy noted in the data include the implementation of training packages, an area which receives both positive and negative comments. One manager noted that:

> I think training packages are simply, like we used to have curriculum and we did something a bit different, and now we do training packages. I think they've made an impact because of the time lines not because of what they are.

Casualisation of work

Public providers have had to respond to resource rationalisation within the business model that policy has implemented. In turn, this has caused a downsizing of staff which is ongoing:

> For the first time in the last five years we've had mass voluntary redundancies. That's something we haven't had to deal with before and so they're big issues.

The casualisation of the public providers' employee profile that results from this kind of situation is not unusual these days, but the impact on changed work practices, as well as on the kinds of continuity required for publicly accountable provision, is reported to be in some jeopardy. Nevertheless, casualisation and the consequent organisational management of the part-time staff are part of the new way of working, where the day-to-day efficient running of the campus involves:

> … the employment and induction of sessional staff and planning of programs.

Another public provider details the way this impacts on day-to-day operations:

> Well you've got a certain number of staff. For instance in terms of financial resources, we only have enough money to pay for our full-time staff. All of the money that supports our part-time staff has to come from some innovative form of delivery.

However, the situation is not restricted to public providers. One private provider comments as follows:

> I think staffing has changed, has shifted, so … we're employing more casual teachers rather than full-time teachers.
>
> Again it's a shifting sand so far as numbers in private industry [are concerned]—the number of students, the number of staff are dictated by the number of students. What will continue to change is the state of the local economy in which we operate, which has an impact on who enrols, what they do and what our graduates do at the end of their courses. So we have to keep adjusting the product to suit that market.

The dictates of 'the bottom line' are reflected here, but also the need for private VET organisations to be agile in their responses to market forces.

Accountability

The issue of accountability—more explicitly the notion of divided loyalty in accountability—is also a strong theme:

> We haven't lost the focus on the student, although sometimes in my role I feel like … I feel like that if the decision is about the student or the money … I do have to battle with that one. But I do think that we actually do things better. I really think that. Accountability.

There are comments on the changed expectations of staff teaching roles:

> Expectations [based on the fact that] once our client group used to be the students, and now we don't say 'students' all that much any more, we say 'clients' because of the expanded nature of our client group: the employers, government, other departments, Indigenous communities, you know our client group is really broad now. And it means that they all have different ways that they want to have things happen. Innovation means a different thing to all of those people, because of their particular circumstances.

Comments such as these highlighting changes do draw attention to a new appreciation on the part of the educators that certain client groups do have different and legitimate needs. The excerpts also show how much more connected (and therefore accountable for broader issues) educators are required to be in comparison with the days when there were just 'students' in classrooms. Another consequence is that:

> ... workloads have increased but, specifically, I think the scope of people's workloads has increased.

Research questions 2 and 4

What factors have brought about these changes? What are the drivers on VET managers?

The massive shift in socioeconomic policy in the VET sector over the last decade has given rise to a wide range of factors affecting VET managers and their ways of leading and managing. These changes have generated cause-and-effect processes which influence how managers perceive their roles and responsibilities, as well as the contexts in which they work. Of primary concern to managers are the organisational–cultural changes and the new skills required for this new environment. They perceive this environment as one in which competition and conflicting interests are daily challenges, and where wide ranges of clients such as learners, industries, communities, and state and national bureaucracies have to be wooed, won and satisfied.

Table 2 shows those factors which are perceived by VET managers and leaders to impact significantly on their leadership roles and responsibilities.

Table 2: Factors influencing change and impacting on VET managers

Drivers	Frequency of occurrence
Leadership and collegiality	41
Policy/strategies (including quality systems and competition)	40
Clients (student, industry, community)	30
Change and globalisation (including forced professional learning to respond to change)	30
Critical social issues (culture, gender, class)	8

Leadership and collegiality

Management and leadership are seen by the project's interviewees to have entered a new paradigm. The old systems are perceived to be of little value in the new work environment as is stressed by one TAFE director:

> ... there's a general acceptance that the sort of autocratic approaches that we've had in the past don't work and that ... you don't necessarily have a great deal of power or authority but basically you have a position which enables you to provide leadership and direction and but

> you don't necessarily have the ability to control and manage people the way you would have in previous sorts of [TAFE] models of management.

New forms of managing and relating are giving rise to new ways of doing things, but this is not an easy road by any means. Old ways of doing things do not just go away despite there being new opportunities and new ways of implementing VET:

> … the bureaucracy is very difficult to remove and it seems to create mechanisms to recreate itself.

Embracing this new paradigm has brought about new challenges. For many it has been a difficult time requiring new skills:

> … the last 5 years have been an absolute struggle to achieve these skills.
>
> You know traditionally in the old days … if you are the boss, no matter how stupid, what you say … everybody just does it. Yes, it is really convenient on some occasions, but you know that is really a very unhelpful way to work.

Many have taken on these new challenges and opportunities, and have seen and experienced the benefits:

> A lot more decision-making has devolved down to the head teacher level. [And] that was quite positive. Because I feel at the head teacher level they really know what needs to be done much more than the stuff being imposed on them.
>
> So [now] I'm probably quite different to the people of the old TAFE.

Managers and leaders are recognising the importance of people in the new paradigm. It is people who will make the new system work:

> The human element is now being asked to be considered more than the economic.
>
> And people are now asking and saying let's bring the human side of things back into the office. I guess it's more so recently because of what, you know, all this economic rationalism that's going on and what not and people are just getting quite sick of it and now asking for … more human and social approach to things and I think that's, that's why it's become more of a focus now.

As the importance of people, their knowledge, skills and their participative roles are becoming recognised at all levels, so the role of interpersonal communication is becoming more significant in the management process. People at all levels are being included in the planning processes:

> … it comes down to letting staff know why these decisions are being made, and I told them everything about it, I guess honest and upfront is the key. And staff were very, very co-operative … and we came up with a number of strategies [on] how we thought we might be able to improve it [quality].

Policy/strategies (including quality systems and competition)

For many managers the last years have meant dealing with conflicting interests and systems in regard to the importance being placed on team work and shared responsibility:

> Policy-making is still a top-down, very much a top-down bureaucratic process that occurs within our organisation. There've been attempts made to shift that and we've actually dismantled a lot of our statewide policy and we've devolved that down to institutes to actually initiate their own policy and their own processes as much as possible.

With the experiences of the policy changes of the last ten years, managers are very sensitive to the need to be aware of policy, especially in terms of possible shifts which may affect how they go about providing services both externally and internally to their organisations:

> … the major sources of policy information … these sorts of areas are critical, they're critical, they're critical because they're changing so frequently, they are creating change which has to

> be managed … whether it's the way you're funded, or whether we, for example, in hard times … can reduce our staffing or not. Whether or how strict we have to be in adhering to the rules, all of these things … have a huge impact on us, how much effort is required to … goes into our management of our business, just huge impact.

Old ways of doing things, operating frameworks have had to be changed:

> … my currencies in those days were a bucket of dollars and teaching hours. And I know I always stayed within the budget … That was the currency and that was what I was managing.

The new policy environment brings with it new leadership challenges and opportunities, challenges and opportunities that require new ways of doing things with new operating foci:

> I think there's a lot of things there [now] that actually link together to enable us to do those things that we want to do … just look at those focus areas that we've established in our whole continuous improvement process and they're the areas that I think are most important for the institute to focus energy into in relation to improvement and leadership. Those areas are, looking after our people, looking after our clients, looking after our product, looking after our systems and managing our assets, and of those, probably the two that we've been most concerned about are the clients and the people. And those two things do tend to link together because we see clients as both internal and external clients.

Linked with this new way of doing things is the recognition and importance of quality product:

> … we also recognise that the strengths of this organisation are based on delivering a quality product and a recognition that we have processes in place there to ensure that the quality standard is maintained, so that's very important to us as well.

With this recognition of the importance of quality also comes possible tension and potential conflict of interest due to economic rationalism:

> We certainly try hard not to sacrifice the quality for the economic outcome. And that's a real challenge because sometimes you can only deliver what you're paid to deliver and what you'd like to deliver is a Rolls Royce but what you have to deliver is a Holden Commodore.

A further tension is the competitive environment in which VET managers and leaders now have to work:

> Leadership has had shifts to align … focus on competition, client service and being more business-focussed rather than government delivery focus, so in answering your question I mean there is a conflict between those things.

One up-side of this competitive environment has meant a greater client focus as is stressed in the next section.

Clients (students, industry, community)

Since moving to the new delivery environment a customer focus has evolved:

> Learner client groups are significantly important today in our organisation, because one of the shifts that has taken place over the last few years is a very definite shift from the sort of public service bureaucracy towards a customer-focussed service industry type of approach and that's part of what we try to do in this institute.

Customers and their needs are perceived by managers to be of great importance to the continued growth and survival of their organisations:

> Our business is about those customers that we've got out there and delivering that service that those customers want and our continued growth in this particular business area depends on satisfied customers.

Clients, to many managers, are not just students sitting behind desks. They are now seen to be all those whom the organisation services:

> We say clients because of the expanded nature of our client group, the employers, government, other departments …

For some this has brought about an expanded sense of purpose and connectedness:

> We're definitely more connected to the community and probably the biggest part of the community would be the business, industry and business, we're probably more connected to them now than we've ever been.

All of these changes have meant that new skills and attitudes have had to be acquired to meet new demands:

> TAFE had to deal with those difficult decisions and those difficult strategies and … in my opinion I don't think it had, at the time, people who were managing or leading who really had built up those skills to be able to deal with it and so there was a lot of, you know, grabbing at how are we going to do this? … How are we going to tell someone that they don't have a job any more, how are we going to say that, you have to work longer hours, that we have to be more client-responsive. How are we going to do those things?

These new ways mean doing things differently:

> Changing that culture about, you know, we have a supply of product here that we're going to deliver to you as a customer the way we want to deliver it, because that's the way we've always done it to one where we actually seek input from the clients themselves as to how they would like their program customised and delivered to suit their individual needs.

Change and globalisation (including forced professional learning to respond to change)

Change has meant new ways of looking at things. It has meant dealing with the implementation of changed frameworks of educational provision and undertaking activities associated with VET in very short time spans:

> Change has been sort of monumental change … Large changes are occurring, so total curriculum out, competency in, training packages in. Things have to really change very quickly and there was no leeway or there was very limited time for adjustment to those changes.

In response to this changed environment those working in the area of VET provision have had to upgrade their skills. For instance:

> Some people have chosen to seek out and develop those [leadership] skills by training … taking on leadership programs that are being run by various groups.

This need for reskilling in leadership and management (in addition to the learning of other skills) has been fairly widely recognised among the interviewees of this research project:

> For our organisation in this … new and fairly openly competitive environment, there were some skills that were needed, especially for the leaders and the managers. And I think that development has been a huge change and I suppose the good side of it is that most people have adapted and they've learnt.

Not only are the hard skills seen as being important but so also are the softer skills. Ways of perceiving one's role and responsibilities in the organisation have changed. The role of VET employees is now larger than merely being involved in VET provision. New expectations are being placed on staff:

> The changes also reflect big-picture thinking, and there's an expectation that staff undertake big-picture thinking, and become more strategic in their approaches whereas previously we

> were saying to people you just focus on your little bit, go about and get those students and do the delivery, now there is an expectation that people in the teams have a bigger understanding. They have to understand where the money comes from, how the different programs are funded, where nationally VET is heading, you know, with competition and so forth … we do expect people to take on those broader issues.

These new ways of doing things have resulted in changes in how staff relate to one another:

> There's changes happening all the time, in the way we work together … there's more bouncing ideas off and sharing [of responsibility]. My staff will approach others rather than [only] me [now] … so I think that's more reasonable now.

This has meant change in organisational culture, especially in terms of gender and the dominant mainstream culture-based management and provision of the past.

Critical social issues (culture, gender, class)

Organisational cultures take time to change. New ways of interacting and doing things differently in VET can be especially difficult:

> We had four blokes in the welding department when I was appointed who said, 'Oh my God, this campus manager is a woman. What are we going to do?' You know, I walked in and they were quite happy to say that to me. … People do become very set in their ways and they find it very hard to adapt.

Some VET managers and leaders have learned to have patience, demonstrating understanding of the difficulties being faced:

> … I didn't have all the baggage they had, all the background and history they had. So that perhaps my mind was a bit more open to the change.

Culture doesn't change overnight to suit new policy, nor do the social circumstances in which VET provision finds itself. Social justice is still a key concern and should remain so. In the following quote the campus manager talks of social responsibility versus economic rationalism:

> [Close down uneconomical campuses] that's the way to fix it, but you can't do that because we are still a public-service agent, and we are still required to deliver a government service, the government policy and the government initiatives and that, a lot of that is about social justice and equity and, you know, we strongly believe in all of those things and therefore there is a major conflict between, you know, the conflict of competition and financial viability when we know that … seven of our campuses are not financially viable, I mean that's the reality.

Where organisational and wider VET cultural change have taken place, new opportunities are being opened. For instance, in the passage which follows an Indigenous head of the Faculty of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies speaks about some of these opportunities:

> I believe that education and training have in the past been used as a means of colonising Indigenous people's minds, you know, and I believe that [now] being in control of the development of curricula and in control of delivery of that curricula or training product or whatever they might be, allows Indigenous people to take back that control of, you know, the minds of the people in our community.

There are many factors and drivers acting on VET managers and leaders in today's world of VET provision. Gone are the comfortable frameworks of the past. New ways are needed to deal with the changes. In the next section a number of the perspectives of interviewees are presented.

Research question 5

How might VET leadership roles and responsibilities change in the next five years?

One of the TAFE institute directors makes the following point concerning future leadership roles and responsibilities:

> I think for an organisation to be able to move forward in the future we need to replace that blame with a trust-type culture which is not about looking for someone to blame but about looking, you know, for solutions that will benefit everyone.

This changing emphasis in the delivery of programs, from 'We know what's best for you' to one that is client-focussed, means that people and their needs are becoming more and more important for quality delivery. Many of the interviewees have pointed this out in different ways. They emphasise the importance of getting the people relationships right both internally and externally.

In answering research question 5 we looked at interviewees' responses in relation to the desirable leadership attributes for VET management in the future. Frequency of occurrence of all responses was analysed, then a categorical synthesis of groups was carried out, resulting in the summary of four key groups of future leadership characteristics which is shown in table 3:

Table 3: Four key groups of leadership attributes for future VET

Leadership attribute group	Occurrence
Character: consistency, ethics, integrity, control	29
Networking, partnerships and alliances	16
Risk-taking, initiative and innovation	12
Futuring: vision, future trends, strategic, proactivity	9

Character: consistency, ethics, integrity, control

Aspects of character register as the most significant roles and responsibilities of future VET leadership. Character attributes included consistency in deed and manner, ethics in deed and manner, integrity in deed and manner, and control. Control included those attributes related to being able to command attention and exert authority, especially in times of uncertainty.

For example, an Indigenous interviewee proposes that future leaders:

> ... need to have the strength, they must maintain that strength, that's one. Commitment, they must make commitments, and don't make commitments that you can't keep. Thirdly is having unison in regards to working with the [whole group providing the service].

A community VET committee industry member reinforces this attitude:

> ... success is consistency at work.

Strength of character on the part of VET leaders and managers is important in these changing times as is recognition and securing the gains which have been made:

> I think it will be more important for people in my position to have that strength of character to protect what we've got, not just for our patch, but protect what we've got. We've got a system at the moment which allows us [public providers] as registered training organisations to operate in the same sense of freedom in many respects as a private provider registered training organisation group can do, and as long as we do it reasonably and legally, but it gives us so much more freedom to meet changing needs, than we ever have, and educational needs than we ever have before and our community needs. Talking from where we're operating, we

> are working as a whole community to meet the needs of this community, it gives us so much more flexibility to do that …

Here are some of the qualities considered important:

> Some of the qualities that are needed?—the person needs to be passionate about what they are delivering … good listening skills, be able to understand the communities, some of perhaps the blockages that may be in that community or within an individual and also this other very strong sense of being able to lead out ahead and call others on to those objectives.

Leaders and managers should:

> Have credibility within the community and industry areas to allow you to stand tall and talk with authority about issues.

These qualities should never be exercised alone, according to many of the interviewees, as is evidenced by the following section.

Networking, partnerships and alliances

The focus of leaders and managers should not only be on internal day-to-day activities but also should have a wider concern:

> It is pretty fundamental about leadership that you would have a big sort of focus on the external and I think if you're very introspective it becomes far too operational and you lose vision pretty quickly if you're only looking inside your own organisation.

Networking, both internally and externally, is essential to the new VET provision paradigm. Internal networking:

> … builds the team, and then the qualities of those teams … team requires you know, the passion and the empathy and integrity.

But network development, especially external networks, takes time and effort:

> I didn't develop these resources overnight or just over two years, it's taken me 20 years and I've had to build up my reputation and build my rapport up within the region to be able to have a good network of people that trust and respect me.

As the new paradigms develop within organisations so roles change, bringing new demands, new ways of doing work. This places even greater importance on networking, collaboration and partnerships:

> The fact that as, as the role [has changed], my job's just got bigger and bigger and bigger, it wasn't able to be done effectively by one or a few people, it had to be done with a whole team or a big group or a wide network of people and I think that's where the network-type situation and the alliance-type situation came in. When you get into a bigger scale of things, you need a whole range of people and a range of skills and you just can't do it by yourself.

As networks grow and develop, so the risk factor increases, and new opportunities require initiative and innovation.

Risk-taking, initiative and innovation

In discussing leadership characteristics for future VET leaders one interviewee states:

> … it's all [about] taking the risk, all that sort of thing is what leadership is about and then … you know, going out on a limb, all those things.

A TAFE associate director contrasts the VET environment of today with that of the past in this next quote. With flatter management structures and no longer a bureaucracy to hide behind, innovation comes to the fore and also its association with risk:

> My recollection of the old system [is] where we were clearly an educational institution, rather like the schools. It was an enormously hierarchical system, you were reluctant to innovate because there were all of these layers sitting above you. Now, the layers aren't there. So in bureaucracy you sort of hide behind layers, whereas the structure as it is now it's much more risky and there's more pressure on you, you've sort of got to take the risks to survive.

The need for innovation and risk-taking in connection with organisational survival is mentioned by other interviewees:

> We're going to have to constantly innovate in the way we do things in the future.
>
> It does need an element of risk, the whole VET stuff is a very risky business at times.

A head of school argues:

> I think we do have to engage with risk. We will be involved in doing a number of things in the future which may put the school at risk in terms of funding and future resource allocation … There is personal courage at the back of that.

Support is necessary in the process; it is not just about one person taking the risk:

> They had to make decisions about, 'do we go down this path because there was risk involved … so people have to, what I would say … support you in that way and give you the direction [so] that you can go ahead and do that.

One entrepreneurial VET manager goes even further by quoting his favorite saying concerning VET leadership:

> 'Don't you think it's better to seek forgiveness than to ask permission', and so that's the sort of thing that I like living by.

These innovative and entrepreneurial attitudes cannot take place in a vacuum. There needs to be a system of support and a safe environment where people are encouraged to reach beyond themselves:

> … one of the key things [for the future] is to provide a secure environment for staff, and I think that's a part of leadership. If staff are confident that their leader's competent and that relationships are stable, you know, they don't have to fight each other or compete with each other then they can be productive and that can be part of that leadership and so they feel secure to take risks and make mistakes and all that kind of stuff.

Another manager supports this type of action:

> It's more about kind of risk-taking and courage, I think that's part of it in terms of giving the staff the confidence to feel like it's going to succeed and to keep moving forwards rather than to be scared about what could go wrong.

Some speak of positive outcomes:

> We did change direction and we did step outside the guidelines to get it done and I guess that's getting back to that risk-taking and just taking the initiative on some things that weren't written in the agreement … And I think that touches on some of the qualities of leadership I guess that we would all agree are really important and that's the ability to take a risk occasionally, like a responsible risk.

Futuring: vision, future trends, strategic, proactivity

Other 'future roles and responsibilities' were interpreted by the respondents in a variety of different ways. Some were very specific, and commented on one aspect of a role; for example, one manager noted that 'performance monitoring and performance management' would be the key role for leadership in the future. Some took a broader view of future roles ('A more proactive role in creating the future … ') and others discussed the need for structural and organisational adjustments.

Among the three comments from participants which follow, the first focusses on industrial relations needs, the second on structural issues and the third relates to the importance of collective vision:

> When we talk about having a leadership process which is not about control, then you also need to look at the industrial relations side of that. How do you actually mould the industrial relations so that you know it is more appropriate to that style of leadership?
>
> The concept of management being up there and workers being down—here is something that needs to disappear … in organisational structures in order for us to manage the future.
>
> [It's] a combination of people. It's people that have had a vision and in doing that are able to bring others on board so that that vision is achieved. In a sense I think that what they have is a vision of what's to be done now, that varies in size but in doing that it's not a one-man operation, it's actually including others and allowing them to be part of that process, to achieve it.

While the previous senior manager refers to a learning and business model, she also makes the link to 'community', which is a significant and newly emerging cluster of needs for the future, as evidenced by the following group of extracts:

> A proactive role outside our own organisation as well as what we do internally; we've got to be seen out there to be taking leadership roles in the community.
>
> Have our people taking positions on boards and on committees and on other planning and regional groups so that you know, we are having input into the overall regional studies as well as input into our own.
>
> Linkages to the community … the cornerstones of my marketing campaign will be community involvement, co-operation and positive outcomes. That will flow, as far as a leadership role is concerned, flow into my people and you know giving them an injection to get taking that higher moral ground and therefore negating the perception of cost.
>
> Cut across those [community] groups and get people working together. Collaborating, forming partnerships, doing things more cost-effectively.

Some comments were general, reinforcing the need for interpersonal connectedness and being proactive in VET leadership:

> Provide an atmosphere of trust.
>
> I'm always looking for the next development, or becoming more better informed, so in a sense it's being proactive, it's like working towards the latest developments, continuing to run rather than reacting to things as they happen, being prepared to constantly change and be able to bring your team through that process.
>
> [Looking to] the big picture in terms of why are we doing this, that bit, that needs to be constantly shared, how our vision has changed as to why we are doing this … The why must always be there, so they are always aware of where we're operating from, we're serving the students' needs, we're serving the industry needs, we're serving the community needs.

One comment asks a hard question about the role of critique in policy formation and iterative processes:

> Whether it's the public sector or the private sector, who will argue back when ANTA or the ITABs are making unreasonable demands?

This list of leadership attributes could prove useful in relation to the development of possible 'competencies' for leadership professional development purposes. However, if this is to occur, then additional validation with other National Research and Evaluation Committee (2000) leadership project outcomes would be required, along with the proviso that these leadership characteristics should be clearly identified as *leadership* rather than *management* characteristics, and that they relate to *individual* leader attributes rather than pertaining to the leadership event, or intervention, itself.

References

Argyris, C 1993, *Knowledge for action: A guide to overcoming barriers to organisational change*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.

Aronson, E, Ellsworth, P C, Carlsmith, J M & Gonzalez, M 1994, *Methods of research in social psychology*, 2nd ed, McGraw-Hill, New York.

Bass, B 1985, *Leadership and performance beyond expectations*, Free Press, New York.

—— 2000, 'The future of leadership in learning organisations', *Journal of Leadership Studies*, vol.7, no.3, pp.18–40.

Bennis, W & Nanus, B 1985, *Leaders: The strategies for taking charge*, Harper Row Publishers, New York.

Bolman, L & Deal, T 1991, *Reframing organizations*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.

Burns, J Mc G 1978, *Leadership*, Harper Row, New York.

Conger, R D 1991, 'Inspiring others: The language of leadership', *Academy of Management Executive*, vol.5, pp.31–45.

CRLRA (Centre for Research and Learning in Regional Australia) 2000, *Managing change through vocational education and training*, research report series, CRLRA, University of Tasmania, Launceston, Tasmania.

Crotty, M 1996, *Phenomenology and nursing research*, Churchill Livingstone, South Melbourne.

Deal, T 1995, *Leading with soul*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.

Dixon, N 1994, *The organisational learning cycle: How we learn collectively*, McGraw-Hill, London.

Drucker, P 1989, *The new realities*, Heinemann, Oxford.

Fairholm, G 1998, *Perspectives on leadership*, Quorum Books, London.

Falk, I 1999, 'Situated leadership: A new community leadership model', in *Rural community partnerships: Education for the 21st century*, proceedings of the National Rural Education Conference of the Country Education Project, Ballarat School of Mines, Country Education Project, Victoria.

Falk, I & Kilpatrick, S 2000, 'What is social capital? A study of rural communities', *Sociologia Ruralis*, vol.40, no.1, pp.87–110.

Falk, I & Mulford, B 2001, 'Enabling leadership: A new community leadership model', in *Learning to manage change: Developing rural communities for a local–global millennium*, ed. I Falk, NCVER, Adelaide.

Farling, M, Stone, A & Winston B 1999, 'Servant leadership: Setting the stage for empirical research', *Journal of Leadership Studies*, vol.6, no.1/2, pp.49–72.

Fielder, F, Chemers M & Mahar L 1978, *The leadership match concept*, Wiley, New York.

Fukuyama, F 1995, *Trust: The social virtues and the creation of prosperity*, Free Press, New York.

Gardner, H 1995, *Leading minds*, Basic Books, New York.

Gardner, J 1988, 'The context and attributes of leadership', *New Management*, vol.5, pp.18–22.

Garfinkel, E 1967, *Studies in ethnomethodology*, Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs.

Glaser, B & Strauss, A 1967, *The discovery of grounded theory*, Aldine, Chicago.

Greenleaf, R 1977, *Servant leadership: A journey into the nature of legitimate power and greatness*, Paulist Press, New York.

Greenleaf, R 1996, *On becoming a servant leader*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.

Helgeson, S 1990, *The female advantage: Women's ways of leadership*, Doubleday, New York.

Heritage, J 1984, *Garfinkel and ethnomethodology*, Polity Press, Cambridge.

Hersey, P & Blanchard, K 1988, *Management and organisational behavior*, Prentice Hall, New Jersey.

Johns, S, Kilpatrick, S, Falk, I & Mulford, B 2000, 'Leadership from within: Rural community revitalisation and the school–community partnership', paper presented at AADES/SPERA International Conference Dawning of Opportunity, 1–4 July, Cairns.

Kahn, R & Katz, D 1960, 'Leadership practices in relation to productivity and morale', in *Group dynamics research and theory*, eds D Cartwright & A Zander, 2nd ed, Row, Paterson, New York.

Leithwood, K & Duke, D 1999, 'A century's quest to understand school leadership', in *Handbook of research on educational administration*, eds J Murphy & K Louis, AERA, Washington DC.

Lincoln, Y & Guba, E 1985, *Naturalistic inquiry*, Sage, Newbury Park, Ca.

NREC (National Research and Evaluation Committee) 2000, *Project brief for VET leadership projects*, NCVER, Adelaide.

OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) 1996, *Lifelong learning for all*, OECD, Paris.

OECD 2001, *Cities and regions in the new learning economy: Education and skills*, OECD, Paris.
O'Toole, J 1995, *Leading change*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.
Patton, M 1990, *Evaluation and research methods*, Sage, Newbury Park.
Peirce, N & Johnson, C 1997, *Boundary crossers: Community leadership for a global age*, Academy of Leadership Press, Maryland, USA.
Redding, J C & Catalanello, R F 1994, *Strategic readiness: The making of the learning organization*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.
Rosener, B 1990, 'Ways women lead', *Harvard Business Review*, November–December, pp.150–60.
Schermerhorn, J 1996, *Management*, 5th ed, Wiley, New Jersey.
Sergiovanni, T 1996, *Leadership for the schoolhouse*, Jossey Bass, San Francisco.
Silverman, D 1997, *Qualitative research: Theory, method and practice*, Sage, London.
Spradley, J P 1980, *Participant observation*, Holt, Rinehart & Winston, New York.
Stake, R 1995, *The art of case study research*, Sage, Thousand Oaks, Ca.
Stogdill, R 1948, 'Personal practices associated with leadership: A survey of the literature', *Journal of Psychology*, vol.25, pp.35–71.
Stogdill, R & Coons, A (eds) 1951, *Leader behavior: Its description and measurement*, research monograph no.88, Ohio State University Bureau of Business Research, Columbus.

Appendix: Methodology

Introduction

The methodology of the study was designed to achieve the aim of the project by building knowledge and theory on the topic of contextual impacts and characteristics of VET leadership in a range of twelve identified sites where delivery occurs. The research is based on the grounded theory-generation and research techniques of, for example, Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Spradley (1980) under the general quality guidelines for qualitative research, such as member-checking and triangulation, detailed in Lincoln and Guba (1985).

This methodology is distinctive, and pays more attention to empirical matters than a simple thematic analysis and a writing-up of a 'case study' or, in the case of this report, the use of 'scenarios'. The use of case studies as an analytical tool is well known, and in this research it is supplemented by two major features: first, the research employs a knowledge-building methodology (as opposed to a traditional theory-testing approach), particularly appropriate when there is little research in a particular area, which is indeed the case with leadership in vocational education and training; and second, the array of analytic tools includes a set of particularly vigorous empirical data-analysing procedures.

Stake (1995) distinguishes between an intrinsic and an instrumental case study. This report is based on instrumental case study criteria. The features of an instrumental case study include:

- that it addresses specific research questions rather than being more open-ended (p.3)
- that the use of this type of case study is *instrumental* to understanding something else (p.3). In this instance, we seek to understand the dynamics of VET leadership
- that in the event of a major case study, it contains focussed case studies that are *instrumental* to learning something more about the overall question.

The distinction is important because, as Stake puts it, 'the methods will be different, depending on intrinsic and instrumental interest' (p.4). These differences are reflected in the diversity of data used across the sites, as well as in the cross-referential manner in which the results reported address the research questions and the derived findings. In part 2, where the detailed results of the analyses are given, the research questions are answered by drawing on the findings from the individual case studies (presented as scenarios) in relation to across-site considerations.

In order to ensure the veracity and durability of the knowledge on which the project outcomes are derived, the gap in research addressed by the project will be addressed by the analysis of two contingents: the characteristics of VET leaders in twelve diverse settings, and the nature of those characteristics in relation to cross-site transferability—that is, which of the characteristics could be described as generic and which are site-specific.

Selecting the sites/contexts

The research team recognises that 85% of VET provision is delivered by TAFE and VET-in-schools programs. For this reason, more than half of the respondents across all sites are TAFE/public providers. However, because of the future-looking element of this study, we recognise that VET

could 'take off' in any number of different forms, as the online learning movement has shown. In addition, the 'new sites for VET' will become the province of the public provider in some way, as in the way sections of TAFE have embraced online learning as a part of its suite of provider modes.

In order to ensure that the project captures the widest possible range of types of delivery in which effective VET leadership occurs, the types of sites in which VET takes place have been selected according to a purposeful sampling model (Patton 1990). The criteria used for selection are spread across:

- states and territories
- urban/rural
- equity groups
- size of provider
- majority of sites registered training organisations but at least one to be independent
- type of provider (private, TAFE, group training, VET-in-schools, community-based, online)
- period of establishment
- relative ease of access to site and participant availability given budget constraints.

Selection of participants

VET managers at different levels are regarded as having a leadership role. Those labelled as 'leaders' are also required to manage. For these reasons, it is important for the project that VET managers at different levels are included as participants in the study. In large organisations, top- as well as middle-level managers were targetted. In addition, group interviews were facilitated in these larger organisations to act as a cross-checking forum. These groups included some of those already the subject of one-on-one interviews and where possible were supplemented by other staff members such as team leaders to promote discussion.

Application of the purposeful sampling of different VET leadership sites using these criteria established the sites for the study (table 4).

Table 4: Summary of sites and participants

Site	State	Description	Interviewees
1	NSW	Large urban public VET provider, high level of industry and commercial activities	6 and 1 focus group
2	NSW	Higher education VET provider	5
3	NSW	Youth focussed VET provider	2
4	Vic	Dispersed and multi-campus regional public VET provider	6 and 1 focus group
5	Vic	VET in a group training company	1
6	Vic	Industry-based VET consultant	1
7	Qld	Large urban public provider: equity focus (Indigenous, gender, migrant)	8 and 1 focus group
8	Qld	Private training organisation	3
9	Qld	Indigenous provider: Non-registered provider	3
10	SA	Rural community-based VET development	3 and 1 focus group
11	WA	Urban TAFE with equity focus (literacy, numeracy)	3
12	Tas	Rural VET-in-schools	3 and 1 focus group
Total number of interviewees			**44**
Total focus group interviews			**5**
Total number of interviews			**49**

Table 5 groups the 12 sites into three groups: TAFE, other public provider and private provider. There are four providers in the *TAFE* type, three in the *other public provider* type, and five in the *private provider* type.

Table 5: Study sites by provider type and organisation

Provider type	Organisation	Number
TAFE	◆ Large urban TAFE	1
	◆ Dispersed rural TAFE	1
	◆ Large urban TAFE equity (Indigenous/gender/migrant) focus	1
	◆ Urban TAFE with equity (literacy/numeracy) focus	1
Other public provider	◆ VET-in-schools	1
	◆ Higher education provider	1
	◆ Rural community-based VET development	1
Private provider	◆ Private training organisation (business college)	1
	◆ VET in a group training company	1
	◆ Industry-based VET consultant	1
	◆ Youth-focussed VET provider	1
	◆ Indigenous community	1
Total number of sites		**12**

Female and male respondents (in table 6 only the one-on-one interview respondents are shown) are fairly evenly divided. It is of interest that there is a majority of males in the *other public provider* type, although when the actual sites in this group are compared in table 4, it could be argued that the nature of the three providers is characteristic of more traditional male-dominated areas.

Table 6: Gender of one-on-one interviewees by provider

Provider type	Gender	
	Female	Male
TAFE	12	11
Other public provider	3	8
Private provider	6	4
Total	**21**	**23**

Table 7 summarises the positions of the respondents within their originating organisation.

Table 7: Job/position description of respondents by provider

Organisation	Position
Large urban TAFE	◆ Assistant director
	◆ Assistant director
	◆ Assistant director
	◆ Assistant director
	◆ Deputy director
Dispersed regional TAFE	◆ Teacher and union organiser
	◆ Manager strategic and commercial services
	◆ Associate director programs
	◆ Campus manager
	◆ Program co-ordinator (campus manager)
	◆ Manager, teaching division
Large urban TAFE equity (Indigenous/gender/migrant) focus	◆ Institute director
	◆ College director
	◆ Operations manager
	◆ Corporate services director
	◆ Head, Faculty of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
	◆ Faculty head
	◆ Learning support teacher
	◆ Administration officer
Urban TAFE with equity (literacy/numeracy) focus	◆ Program manager, general studies
	◆ Managing director
	◆ Adult Migrant Education Program manager
Rural VET-in-schools	◆ VET teacher
	◆ VET co-ordinator
	◆ VET committee member
Higher education provider	◆ Head, School of Engineering and Industrial Design
	◆ Director, Research Centre
	◆ Head of school
	◆ Head of school
	◆ Director, Centre for Construction Technology and Research
Rural community-based VET development	◆ Senior consultant
	◆ Small business development consultant
	◆ Senior consultant
Private training organisation (business college)	◆ Principal
	◆ Academic co-ordinator
	◆ Travel–tourism co-ordinator
VET in a group training company	◆ Operations manager
Industry-based VET consultant	◆ Managing director
Youth-focussed VET provider	◆ Co-ordinator
	◆ Team leader
Indigenous community	◆ Community chairperson (Co-ordinator of Woman's Centre)
	◆ Community vice-chairperson
	◆ CDEP administrator

Table 8 describes the missions (or major goals) of the organisations according to the three types of provider.

Table 8: Mission of provider organisations

Provider type	Organisation	Mission
TAFE	Large urban TAFE	To be the premier provider of customer-centred VET
	Dispersed regional TAFE	To be selected first and every time for the provision of vocational education and training and related services
	Large urban TAFE equity (Indigenous/gender/migrant) focus	To lead in the delivery of innovative quality training and in the development of instructional design
	Urban TAFE with equity (literacy/numeracy) focus	To provide quality vocational education and training products and services to meet the needs and expectations of clients
Other public provider	VET-in-schools	To provide the focus for educational excellence for our community
	Higher education provider	To provide excellence in higher education, research and associated community service in [city area]
	Rural community-based VET development	To be [state's] leading rural consultancy
Private provider	Private training organisation (business college)	To be one of the world's leading private education providers
	VET in a group training company	By 2005 we will deliver work for every GRGT job seeker in the [Name] region.
	Industry-based VET consultant	[Deliberate choice not to have a Mission, but goal] To give the shareholders/staff gainful and educationally and politically ethical employment with some security of tenure
	Youth-focussed VET provider	To take whatever initiatives are necessary to see the Kingdom come in Australia through: 1. Change in the lives of Australians; 2. Growth in the Christian community; 3. Illumination and transformation of Australian society and culture so that it has the option of knowing and fulfilling its destiny in the world
	Indigenous community	Provide employment and training opportunities to unemployed jobseekers to gain permanent employment
		Work with the whole family in regards to domestic and family violence

Data sources and instruments

There are three sources of data for the project:

- document collection and analysis
- interviews and schedules
- group interviews.

Document collection and analysis

Documents related to the goals and identity of the organisation were requested and gathered and, when on site, additional documents relevant to the project were collected for later examination.

Interviews and schedules

There were three instruments. One was a survey which required written responses. The written items included the administrative background details, information on interviewees' roles and responsibilities and their organisational goals and mission statements. Interviewees were also asked for their own definition of leadership, and to prioritise the ten most important statements about leadership from a list of 28 items. The second instrument was the one-on-one semi-structured interview schedule whose primary purposes was to engage the respondents in discussion about their views and experiences with leadership, especially in connection with the relationship between the

various impacts or drivers on their work in their organisations. The third instrument was a semi-structured interview schedule for the group interviews aimed at engaging the members of the group in discussion about the nature of leadership and discussion of examples from experience of significant leadership moments.

Group interviews

As noted above, in addition to the individual interviews, a number of focus group interviews were conducted (see table 4). These took place in the larger (in terms of staffing) sites, where the individual interviews were supplemented by a group discussion both with those who were involved in the individual interviews and with other staff who were included for additional dynamics and perspectives. The total participants, therefore, number 49.

All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed ready for analysis.

Procedure

Each interviewee involved in the face-to-face interviews received a letter in which the above three means of data collection were explained to them. The interviewees also received a questionnaire which gathered their personal information, as well as information about their organisation, such as organisational structure, mission statement and objectives. The interviewees were then requested to reflect on their leadership roles, and write up their thoughts concerning five of the different contextual impacts in which they work and lead. That is, what are the drivers which influence the leadership? They were also asked to write up their thoughts on what constituted leadership in VET, given the shifting contextual impacts and organisational characteristics involved in VET in contemporary times.

The final part of the preparatory work consisted of presenting a single page of 28 different leadership characteristics. These characteristics were gathered from a wide range of different sources, including accepted standard academic texts on the subject, recent VET listings of leadership competencies, a comprehensive selection of newspaper employment advertisements, and other literature on leadership. Participants were asked to choose ten they considered the most important for leadership, and then to prioritise them. They were also asked to add any of their own, which they thought were important, and to place these into the prioritised list.

The preparatory work completed by each interviewee was then forwarded to the person doing the interview, and used together with a semi-structured questionnaire in the interview situation. Each interview took about one hour. The primary purpose of the interviews was to invite participants to draw on the experience where they and others exercised leadership in VET. The interviews focussed on experiences of change—past, present and future—where leadership was seen to be exercised in that situation by themselves and others. Finally, interviewees were also asked to consider all the contextual impacts within which their organisation has to function. They were requested to discuss which contextual factors they thought would have the most impact on how leaders do their work in their organisation over the next five years. They were also asked to consider how leadership roles and responsibilities may need to change to fit these contexts.

The final part of the data-gathering, aimed at the larger and more complex sites, consisted of a focus group discussion between participants of a particular site. Here the aim was to allow a facilitated group dynamic to elicit the participants' interactive experiences of leadership in different situations. It also aimed at facilitating, with associated discussion, a consensually derived and prioritised list of up to five of the most important roles and responsibilities of leadership in their organisation.

Analysis of data

The data were analysed using a triangulation of techniques, each aimed at a different level of data. These techniques are briefly described.

Thematic analysis—manual and NUD*IST

The questionnaire and interview data were transcribed then 'chunked' into NUD*IST format. Transcripts were checked for themes by processes described by Aronson et al. (1990):

> Themes are identified by 'bringing together components or fragments of ideas or experiences, which often are meaningless when viewed alone' (Leininger 1985, p.60). Themes that emerge from informants' stories are pieced together to form a comprehensive picture of their collective experience. (Aronson et al. 1990, p.1)

In addition, NUD*IST files were quizzed according to the framework established which was selected to best answer the research questions for the study. The framework also allowed a number of other, related questions to be generated.

Documents were scanned for additional information relating to organisation attributes, management structures and strategic goals and objectives.

Comparison of all data across the sites provides a checking of the data internal to the sites, as well as identifying any common elements across the sites. Analysis of data within each site provides the specific information about leadership peculiar to that particular configuration.

Tabulation

Answers to relevant questions from both written questionnaire responses and the one-on-one and group interviews were summarised into table form and are reported in detail in part 2 of this report. These tables were not intended to yield statistically generaliseable information; rather, they were summarised data from questionnaires and surveys where response numbers required such a summary. The outcome of the tabulation allows readers to better access the nature of the responses across the whole range of interviews, and also provides the researcher with evidence for identification of thematic groupings—or indeed sub-themes and categories.

Detailed micro-analyses

The two techniques above are supplemented by a set of ethnomethodological (Garfinkel 1967) analytic techniques referred to as conversation analysis (for example, Heritage 1984). Social actors talk into being the aspects of their lifeworlds relevant to them. Hence, the sites in which this research occurs are capable of yielding different and rich information as people disclose the resources they bring to their activities. These 'resources' are accessible in the participants' conversations and interviews. They therefore become available for scrutiny by the researcher, and are accountable on a moment-by-moment basis in their interview talk.

The empirical data for analysing what counts as 'change', 'impacts', 'drivers' and 'contexts' for those people at each site are available by analysing their texts using conversation analysis of interview data.

Reporting as case study/scenarios

The methods and techniques of the study were also informed by the need for a rigorous and empirical form of building pre-specified and reliable knowledge outcomes, since this is a theory-building and knowledge-building project. This framework is one called 'instrumental case study' (Stake 1995). In the research, the scenarios presented in chapter 4 were prepared according to these methodological precepts.

NCVER

The National Centre for Vocational Education Research is Australia's primary research and development organisation in the field of vocational education and training.

NCVER undertakes and manages research programs and monitors the performance of Australia's training system.

NCVER provides a range of information aimed at improving the quality of training at all levels.

ISBN 1 74096 133 1 print edition
ISBN 1 74096 134 X web edition

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

NOTICE

Reproduction Basis

[X] This document is covered by a signed "Reproduction Release (Blanket)" form (on file within the ERIC system), encompassing all or classes of documents from its source organization and, therefore, does not require a "Specific Document" Release form.

[ ] This document is Federally-funded, or carries its own permission to reproduce, or is otherwise in the public domain and, therefore, may be reproduced by ERIC without a signed Reproduction Release form (either "Specific Document" or "Blanket").